



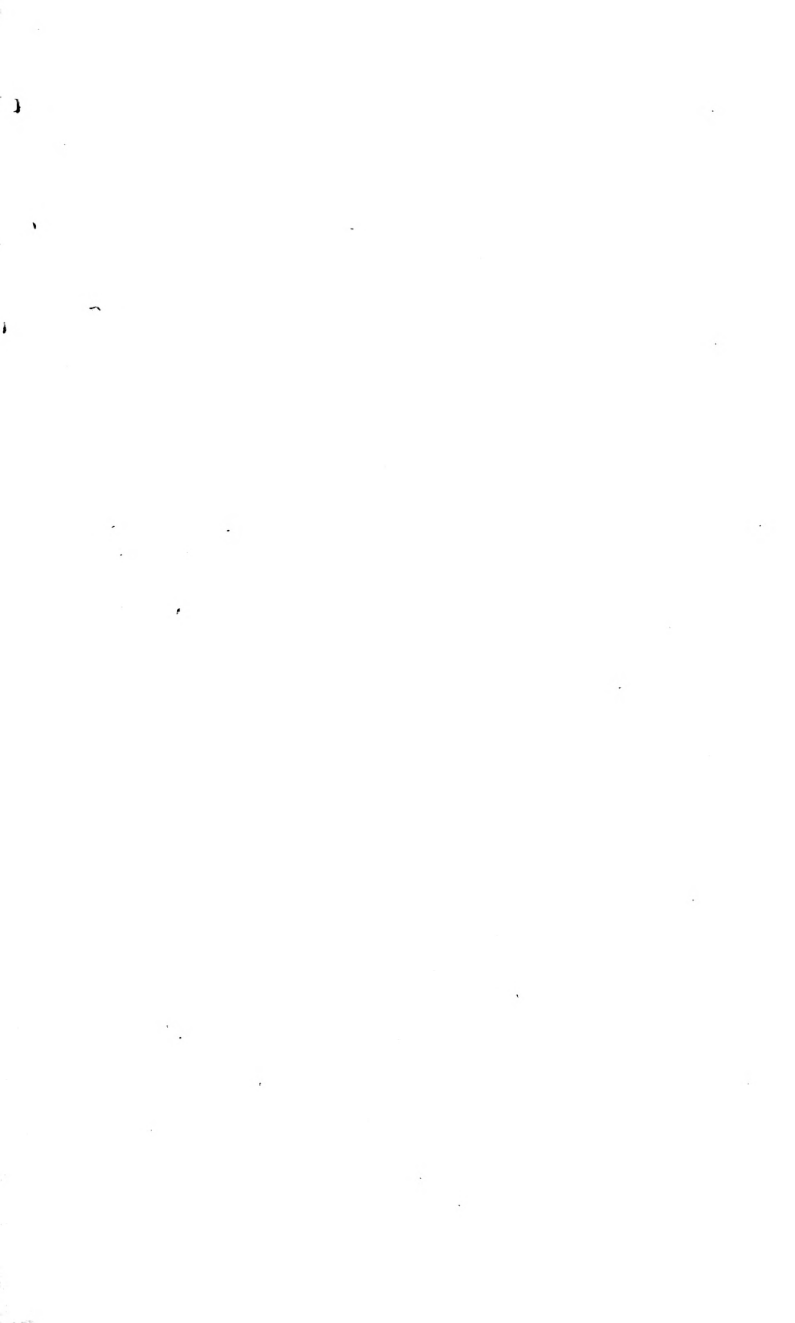
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DRAMATIC STORIES.

“ Let us know when we may cry,
‘ *Altro Volto.*’ *Anglice,* ‘ Again ! again ! ’ ”
Spectator.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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GODWIN AND GODA.

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CHAPTER XIII.

IT was on the evening of the same day, that the oblique rays of the nearly setting sun, lit up a scene of extraordinary splendour in the Danish camp: by the command of their monarch, the whole army had been ordered under arms; and they were now ranged in a vast crescent around a temporary throne, erected upon some blocks of granite that stood upon the plain; probably, from the method of their disposal, the relics of a Druidical cromlech, and which to suit their present purpose, had been not untastefully draped, and by the help of spears and other weapons, canopied with mantles of various colours and patterns of embroidery. The appearance of the whole scene was imposing in the extreme, and

would have been no unfit subject for the rainbow-tinted pencil of Turner—the Rembrandt of brilliancy, who loves to produce the same startling effects by universalizing light, that the painter of the Rhine did by concentrating it in shade. On one side, surmounted by the sacred raven, the throne itself, where purple, green, yellow, scarlet and crimson, were blended together, and sprinkled with sparkling gold and silver : at the foot of this throne, a throng of chiefs and ladies, sumptuously and variously arrayed :—on the other side the bearded and armed warriors, knotted in various groupes, but stretching out into a curve of semicircular perspective :—and all this backed by the western sky, radiant with the glory of sunset, where the very clouds added to the brightness and gorgeousness of the prospect.

But though the whole Danish army to a man, chiefs and all, were here assembled, not one knew for what purpose they had been convened, and various and contradictory were the reports on this head, which flew from man to man, and from rank to rank. The King himself had not been seen by any one, since his arrival at his own tent, where he had shut himself up, with strict orders not to be interrupted; and even Ulf had three several times been denied access to him.

The English army had departed on their southward march, immediately after the settle-

ment of the treaty ; though not a few of their chieftains had remained behind, either to communicate with their friends, who had enlisted on the side of the Dane, or out of mere curiosity : of those, who had been actuated by the former motive was Ulfnoth, who had with little difficulty found his son ; and their meeting had been as cordial, as might have been anticipated from their former affection and the length of their late separation.

Godwin having respectfully listened to all his father had to communicate, which was not much, began himself after some hesitation, and with yet more stammering, to unfold the secret of his love ; and while Ulfnoth was agonizing his son with what was intended to terminate in an approval, but which the old gentleman thought fit to protract by sundry wise saws and conditional *ifs* and *buts*, they were interrupted by a general shout from the army announcing the arrival of King Knute.

He was accompanied by a single attendant, and a whisper, caught from those nearest to the throne, soon spread among the host, that this was no other than Eadric Streona ; how he had gained access to the King, how long he had been there, and what had been the object of their conference, was a mystery to every one present, and must so remain, unless some more industrious and accurate antiquary than myself will undertake to throw light upon the matter.

The monarch ascended the throne, and up-

lifting both hands, hushed the shout that welcomed him even while it was at its full height, he remained in that attitude, for nearly a minute, and his figure supplied all that could have been wanting to perfect the before-sketched picture. He was dressed in his long crimson cloth mantle brodered with black ravens, and wore besides a profusion of chains and jewels: on his head, instead of his usual chaplet of pearls, he wore a radiated diadem of gold, the circle of which was studded with large gems; gradually relaxing from his commanding attitude, he touched this diadem with his left hand, while with his right he pointed to the sacred standard, and in a low-pitched but clear and audible voice, he said ;—" Friends ! we are winners !"

A loud and long shout followed this announcement, perhaps rather an unnecessary one; but then there rarely is much novel information in a speech from the throne. Knute in vain resorted to his former method of obtaining silence; the soldiers had their shout out, and would not listen to what their King had to say, one moment sooner than it pleased them so to do; when this time arrived, he addressed them, in a calm, dignified and very solemn tone, as follows :—

"We are winners, my friends; not indeed of all we fought for, but yet of enough to gladden for: still, even amid our gladness, we must not forget to do right,—and to punish him, who hath done

wrong. Of late I have made a law, that whoso slayeth a warrior of my host shall be punished therefore. The law hath been broken; and by whom? Even by him, who now speaks to you;—Even by your King, who made the law. —Who will arraign him from this misdeed?”

A pause naturally followed this extraordinary proposition, and Knute having descended from his throne continued.

“No one? Then do I arraign myself, as guilty of the sin of manslaughter. I have done the sin:—I did it in the sight of all men;—in the open day; I did it in the sight of those, any one of whom for so doing, I would have sorely punished, even to the uttermost of the law. It availeth nothing that I grieve from my heart for the evil I have done;—it availeth nothing for him that is slain;—nor for his friends—I have done the evil;—what shall be my meed?”

“What hinders you from answering?—Not fear? See!—I take off my crown.—See! I throw aside my kingly mantle;—I unclad myself of all tokens of my might, and speak to you as only a man. What shall my award be for the misdeed I have done? By the head of my father I swear, I will yield to the doom ye shall doom me, and will honour him, who shall speak it. On my knees I ask that doom.”

A murmur ran through the whole army; many were moved even to tears: it was a

popular and imposing spectacle, and no one at the moment had time or inclination to reflect whether there was not more ostentation than real magnanimity, in the King's conduct. The chiefs withdrew aside and consulted for a few moments ; and it was unanimously agreed, that it would be improper both in principle, and as a precedent, for subjects to judge their monarch. How well it would be for Kings if men had continued in that mind to this day.

Ulf, with unfeigned respect, (for he believed Knute to be quite sincere, and he knew him well too,) communicated to the King the result of their deliberation ; and Knute, who had risen to his feet again, said ;—" 'Tis well, *I* take the duty, and will duly do it. Bring me the doomer's staff."

A black wand was brought to him.

Knute. What is the weregild of the man slain ?

Bocler, the King's scribe and law-expounder advanced and said ;—" He was but a yeoman : his weregild is forty pounds of gold."

Knute. But a yeoman ? Slain though by a King ?—I hereby doom myself—(and he broke the wand over his own head)—to pay nine times that sum, and nine pounds over, to the kinsmen of the slain : and the amends shall be paid, before I again break bread.

Amid the stifled acclamations of surprise

and admiration that burst from the spectators, one man rushed forward, knelt at Knute's feet, kissed the hem of his garment, and picking up the fragments of the broken staff, thrust them into the bosom of his tunic, and said ;—" This is all I take—not one penninga of the weregild shall these fingers touch."

It was the deceased's brother : and he kept his word—neither entreaties nor commands would induce him to take his rightful share of the wealth, which by the law was to be divided among certain relatives of the slain : but he easily obtained leave of absence for himself and a comrade, to bear the large sum of money over to his mother and sisters in Denmark—and this comrade he took with him, as he himself stated, not so much as a safeguard of the wealth, as that he would not break his vow—and even *touch* the money : he returned to England after it had been duly paid.—It might, perhaps, admit of a question, which was really the nobler act—that of King Knute, or of this poor soldier.—

The King that evening, while leaning on the arms of Godwin and Ulf on his return to the tent—made but one observation, which was,—“ I foreboded I should fall, brother Ulf.—”

To which Ulf answered ;—"Thou hast risen

from thy fall, a tenfold greater King, and better man.—”

If Ulf had been a classical scholar, it is ten to one he would have called in the Libyan giant to have assisted him with a simile—and so—in my poor opinion—have spoiled his simple answer.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR tale is now drawing to a conclusion, gentle reader ; and yet of late there has been but little mention made of the two individuals, whose names have been put forth as a sort of title to these pages : but there remained, in fact, little more to tell of them—they were happy in each other's love—and their affections were sanctioned by all parties who had any interest in them—by Goda's brother on the one hand—by Godwin's father—and to crown all, by the King himself :—the details, therefore, of their “ true love,” the course of which—(if an opposition may be ventured to be set up against the authority of our great master—) did run smooth—would be insipid and uninteresting—insipid to

those, (if such there be) who know not what love is—and very uninteresting to those, whose thoughts may haply be engaged about their own passion.—

Let them be happy then without our interruption, for a few months—at the end of which time—namely on the first of December—their wedding was appointed to take place in the cathedral church of Gloucester, in which city, as the capital of his kingdom of Mercia, Knute had taken up his residence :—he himself authorised, and promised to be present at the ceremony ; and yet further to add to its solemnity, declared his intention of being re-baptized at the same time, and of returning, like a penitent son, into the bosom of the mother church which had nursed him in his infancy : this intention was no sooner expressed, than it was adopted, almost universally, through his army with that modest facility of conscience, which, in nearly all times, has induced the people to change their faith, whenever it seemed fit to their rulers so to do ; and quite right—as the latter must clearly best know, what *is* best both for themselves and their subjects : or else what would be the use of Princes ?

Many even, who had been born and had lived devout believers of the christian doctrine—that is, as taught by the holy catholic church—and for whom, therefore, there could exist no possible necessity for a repetition of the ceremony of

baptism, nevertheless could not forego the enticing opportunity of being admitted afresh into the congregation of Christians at the same time with a King—and some of them argued, (and certainly with a show of truth,) that, as their lives had not been spent by any means in the regular exercise of their religious duties, a renovation of their souls, by a participation in the sacrament of baptism, could at least do them no harm—and, as the priests had no objection perhaps to the augmentation of the gifts usually made on such occasions,—these arguments were allowed to be very weighty and sensible.

As a good number of hands, therefore, were necessary on the present occasion, all the clergy that could be got at, were put in requisition; and not only those from the immediate neighbourhood attended, but several even from distant parts of the kingdom, who were drawn to the spot either by zeal, interest, or curiosity.—Certainly to be classed among the former, was the veteran Egenoth, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who came express from his palace at Croydon, not deeming it fit that the baptismal benediction of a King, should be uttered by less dignified lips, than those of St. Augustine's successor.

The ceremony took place at sun-rise—and it was a grand and imposing one.—The spot chosen was a meadow without the walls of the

city—skirted by a sweep of the Severn, a considerable portion of whose water was that day made holy, to supply “the outward visible sign or form of baptism,”—the grass and leafless branches of a neighbouring wood, had been crisped by a sharp hoar frost, the preceding night—and the icy crystals, sparkling with the various hues of diamonds, gave a brilliancy and cheerfulness to the scene, which might have vied with the utmost beauty of a dewy summer’s dawn.

The whole of the Danish camp, — (with the exception of a small body of men who stood aloof, either disinclined to embrace the new faith, or thinking it needless to do so a second time—) from the King to the lowest soldier—knelt, bare-headed and unarmed, in a circle, the middle of which was occupied by the archbishop and the other priests, in their ecclesiastical dresses—all snow-white upon this solemn occasion.

Before the immediate commencement of the rite, Egenoth addressed his immense congregation, in a discourse suited to their capacities, and likely to remove their ignorance of the creed they were about to embrace,—he gave a concise but clear sketch of the Jewish history—establishing the miracles and prophecies therein unfolded as the foundation of Christianity—he showed that these prophecies had been fulfilled in the person of Christ—of whose life, and acts, and

doctrines, he traced a forcible outline : of his death he spoke more elaborately, entering into a minute and almost painful detail, of the sufferings and agonies which the Son of God had borne for the sins of men—and that conviction, which, perhaps, the sweetest eloquence, or the strongest argument might have failed to produce, was awakened in the breasts of these rude warriors, by compassion and sympathy for sufferings, which, under circumstances of contrary excitement, they would even have gloried in inflicting on their fellow-creatures. It was a strange sight to see—and a strange sound to hear ; the tears ran down the cheeks of many a hardy veteran—and the moans and sobs involuntarily burst from lips, hitherto used to the utterance of heathen oaths, and shouts of deadly defiance.

As soon as the address was ended, the rite of baptism was performed, and the army of new Christians, then followed their pastor and his attendants to the city—the clergy chanting a *Kyrie eleeson*, in which the soldiers from time to time joined as they best could,—as it were, irresistibly compelled so to do, by the solemnity of the sound—for not a syllable of the meaning did they comprehend.

In the cathedral, Godwin and Goda were married, with all due pomp and ceremony—Knute acting as sponsor on the occasion, and giving away the bride.—The reader shall not

be detained by any particular narration of the dresses worn on the occasion—nor of the details of the rite—for having announced the conclusion of our tale, it is fit that it should be rather hastened than delayed.—

After the marriage, Godwin and Goda were not, by the etiquette of those days, allowed to pass the rest of the day by themselves, as is, I believe, the modern, and apparently more sensible custom;—but they were expected to grace with their presence, certain games and pastimes, which were held in honour of the happy event.—These were held in the open air—on the same spot, which an hour before had been consecrated to a holier purpose: they consisted, principally, of various kinds of archery—leaping—wrestling—throwing at the bar, and so forth;—for the victors in all of these, certain prizes were allotted, which were dealt out by the fair hands of Goda herself: the last of the amusements—and though last not least among them,—was a race, to be run by three horses, which Knute, the week before, had received as a present from his brother King; and which were said to be lineal descendants from those which Hugh Capet had sent to Edmund's great great uncle Athelstane, when the French monarch had solicited the hand of the English princess Ethelswitha.—

If a modern amateur of this fashionable sport, by chance glancing an idle eye over these

pages to fill up the tedium of a rainy afternoon, should smile in mockery at the notion of a race being run by three horses only,—will not his smile break out in very laughter?—when he reads that only one course was run—that the riders,—for I dare not dignify them with the honourable name of *jockies*—were neither weighed, nor laden with weights, nor had, in fact, gone through any species of preparatory training—and—most ridiculous and contemptible of all!—that the spectators looked on the race as a source of mere idle amusement, and not one of them had the wit to think of betting upon the issue, and thereby running the risk of adding a profit to a pleasure! And yet we talk of the wisdom of our forefathers!—But we never can mean to allude to such “very Goths” as these, who had not heart to stake a fortune upon the swiftness of a horse’s heels.

One little incident happened during the race, which may be worth relating, were it only as being explanatory of another shocking irregularity, which at these times prevailed at such solemnities. All the three riders were Saxons: men, who had come with the animals, and who had themselves trained,—and were consequently well acquainted with them. Owing to some unaccountable freak;—for to such, animals are subject as well as men,—one of the horses, (a chesnut stallion, if posterity should be very anxious to know) soon after the starting, became

rather restive, and seemed inclined to go any way but that which his rider wished him; the consequence was, that after a few rears, plunges, and bounds, the rider fairly fell off,—(not that I would, by that word *fairly*, insinuate that such an awkward accident ever did or could happen *unfairly*)—and the unriden horse now set off at full gallop after his mates, whom he seemed to stand a good chance of overtaking or distancing. The mob, who were shouting loud enough before from a simple desire of exercising their lungs, now shouted doubly loud at this additional piece of fun, and this double shout was, if possible, redoubled, when, as the unriden horse passed by Haco, who was lying his lazy length on the frosty grass, seemingly quite unconscious of all that was going on around him, he suddenly sprang up, with his left hand caught the animal by the bridle, and with his right laying hold of the pommel of the saddle, after running by his side a few paces, swung himself into the seat, which he firmly kept, in spite of all the beast's renewed efforts to get rid of his encumbrance: and what with spurring and humouring, Haco managed better than his forerunner, and with so great success, that he arrived at the winning post within half a neck before his competitors. He was consequently acknowledged as winner, by almost every one, except the two Saxons, who declared that such a method of proceeding was manifestly unfair:

and in an obscure Latin MS. that has fallen in my way, I find it somewhat dimly hinted, that this incident was the occasion of the establishment of the law, which has ever since obtained on the turf,—that any horse, throwing his rider, cannot possibly be the winner of that heat.

Be that as it may; Haco was hailed the victor, and as such received from Goda the badge of triumph, a silver gilt bell: and as he took it from her, he said in a tone and with a look, that made her bridegroom feel somewhat fidgety;—"This is scantily the reward I had looked for from these fair hands."

Let us now follow the royal party into the great hall of the city, where the marriage feast was spread in proper profusion, and discussed with all due rites: during its celebration the company were gratified, by a seemingly interminable Danish epithalamium in rhyme; in which the poet said every thing, that was proper to be said, about marriage, and a great deal about almost every thing else in the world: whether this effusion ever would have reached a legitimate end, it is impossible at this distance of time to assert with any degree of certainty; one thing however, is certain,—that it did not, for Knute, after it had lasted a tediously long while cut it short by exclaiming—

"But wherefore sleeps the harp of Ruder? why should the tongue of the aged Scald be wordless?"

The poet, who hereby was some what uncourteously checked, turned away in great disgust, while all other eyes were directed towards him, who had been thus apostrophically addressed: he was a very old man, with a quite bald head and exceedingly long white beard, sitting a short space behind Knute, and leaning on his small silver-wired harp: he was one of those, who had stood apart from the sacred solemnity of the morning; and it had been observed by some, who minded others' matters more than their own, that he had not at all joined in the festivity of the afternoon.

The old man made no answer however, either to the King's speech, or to the numerous enquiring glance of his guests, and Knute, turning to him, said;—"Will not the old Scalld sing, at the wish of his King?"

The bard ran his fingers over his harp, but produced only harsh and discordant sounds: he paused, and answered;—"What should the old Scalld sing? Wa la! wa la! Better that these dim eyes should have been shut in darkness, even the darkness of death, than they should have seen, what they have seen to day: for have they not seen a folk give up the belief of their fathers?—the belief that their fathers lived and died in—the belief wherein they themselves were born,—but shall not die: but wherefore do I tarry?"—and he again struck his harp, and now produced a

wild but grand harmony from its strings; at the same time that his voice, rising and falling with the chords, fell into a species of modulated chaunt, as he continued the following Runic version of the Creation;—

The King wisheth his Scalld to sing,—
The Scalld of many days,
The Scalld of many winters;
Shall not the Scalld hearken to the wish of the King?
Lo! he shall!—and lo! he doth!
But he singeth no song of gladness,
Nor singeth he one of sorrow,
But the song of former days he singeth,
Even the song of our old belief.
List to it, King, and Lords, and Ladies;—
Listen to it, all ye laity;—
Listen to what your fathers believed—
Listen ye, who are unbelievers.

From everlasting was the ALL-FATHER.
First he made the home of the Evil,
In the furthest North made he their home:
And in the furthest South he made
The home of the MUSPELS; o'er whom ruled
Black SURTUR of the burning sword.
Whither, from the source of middle hell,
Roll'd rivers, whose waters were of death,—
Roll'd and gather'd into one mass,
Filling that side with encrusted poison,
And with cold ice, and with damp mists;
Beneath the which, in the inner side,
Were the whirlwinds and the harrowing storms:
From the other side came sparks of lightnings—
Even from the world of SURTUR.—
Between the icy wind of the North
And the fiery wind of the South,

Was the midway bottomless pit,
Light and lovely, smooth and calm.
North of this began the Making,
The breath of life went forth,
And warmed the cold damp mists,
And they became moist drops.
And by the power of the PLACER,
The mighty YMIR was born.
And he slept, and a man and a woman
Sprang from beneath his arm ;
And a son from beneath his feet :
And from these the Giants came :
The Giants of the Frost ;
Who grew in number
And became bad as YMIR.
And with YMIR was born the cow ÆDUMLA ;
And he fed on her streams of milk :
From her sprang One of beauty and might :
Even the Father of BORE :
And BORE, on a Giant's daughter,
Begot the three great gods,
ODINN and his twain brethren.
These slew the wicked YMIR—
And his blood drowned the Frost-Giants—
Save one who was wise—with his household—
And they escaped in a boat.
And ODINN and his twain brethren
Dragged the Giant YMIR's body
Into the mid-way bottomless pit.
And water and seas they made of his blood—
And mountains of his bones—
And rocks they made of his teeth—
And the firmament of his scull,
And it rested on the earth—
Its four corners upheld by Dwarfs—
East and west—north and south—

His brains were tossed aloft,
And they became the clouds,—
And his hair became the shrubs.
And fires from the home of the MUSPELS
They seized to enlighten earth,
From upper and lower heaven.
The earth was round—around it the deep :
On its shores dwelt the Giants;
But the brethren raised against them
A bulwark round the world—
Even the bulwark MIDGARD.
And midway in the earth
They built the court of the Gods,
And called the same ASGARD.
There from his high throne, LIDSKIALF,
ODINN doth behold
All things and every where.

And the Brethren found on the shore
Two bits of wood a-floating ;
And of one they made a man—
ASKÉ called they him—
Of the other they made a woman—
EMLA called they her :
From these sprang all mankind.

But ODINN took to wife
His lovely daughter FREYA—
On her he begat the Gods.
In heaven is their holy home,
Under the huge ash YDRASIL—
The greatest of all trees,
Whose roots cover the home of the Evil—
Whose boughs spread over the earth—
Shooting over the heaven.

From the end of the shower-arch—
The bridge of earth and sky—
HEIMDALL watcheth the Giants—

The warder of the Gods—
He seeth by night and day
One hundred leagues around—
He heareth even the wool
Grow on the back of the sheep.
His trump startleth all worlds.

The souls of the slain in war are taken
Into the heavenly hall of ODINN—
VALHALLA of the many gates—
Five hundred and two score in number—
There they live in happiness;
Each morning they do fight,
And cleave one another to pieces;
But lo! again they are whole and unhurt—
And SCRIMNER the boar, each day,
They hunt, and slay, and eat.
Ale from the skulls of their foes they drink,
Or mead that cannot be drained—
Or the dewy milk of the she-goat.——

Yet is there LOKE of the Giants—
Handsome is he and cunning;
But evil and spiteful too;—
And so fickle withal, that often
Hath he saved the Gods, his foes.
He begat on a Giantess
FEURIS the wolf—and the GREAT SNAKE—
And HELA—which is Death.
The Gods heard the forebodings—and trembled—
And from the Giants' land
ODINN sent for these three.
HELA to rule in the home of the Evil
Over the nine sorrowful worlds
Of the Dead from sickness or age,
Grief is her hall—Dearth her board Hunger her
knife—
Sloth and Slackness her household slaves—
Faintness her porch—Falling her gate—

Cursing and Howling her tent—
Sickness and Pain her bed.

The Great Snake he threw
Into the midst of the sea—
There hath he grown and grown
And surroundeth the earth with his coils.

FEURIS they bred awhile among them,
Then traitorously bound him,
In an enchanted chain, to a rock,
And sunk him deep in the earth.

And they encaverned LOKE,
With a viper hung over his head,
Whose poison drops on his face.

But the twilight of the gods shall come—
And LOKE and FEURIS shall break forth—
And with the Great Snake and the Giants of Frost,
And the fiery-sworded SURTUR,
And the Powers of the House of Evil,
Shall rush o'er the crashing bridge of heaven ;
And with the gods and heroes of Valhalla
Shall wage a dreadful war.
LOKE and HEIMDALL shall fall,
Each by the other's hand.

THOR the strongest of ODINN's race
Shall slay the Great Snake—
But he shall be strangled in its blood.
And FEURIS THE WOLF shall devour the Sun and

ODINN—

And VIDAR the son of ODINN
Shall rend himself insunder.
And SURTUR of the fires shall consume
The world—and the gods—heroes and men.

But another earth shall rise,
Another and a better—
And a Sun and Gods and happier men.
Then shall the truth be clear

As the Sun of a cloudless noon—
But of a milder, calmer beam—
Such as the eyes of men may bear :
And no new-fangled faith
Shall shade or darken its brightness—
We shall not live to see
The coming of this happy tide—
We, nor our children's grandchildren. .
For we shall go. . we shall go down to the. . to the
valley of. .

* * * * *

The voice and touch of the old man, which had become feeble and faltering, now stopped ; and his audience, not unmoved by his recital, waited for a second or two with patience for his recommencement: but when they found that he was still silent, and did not stir his head, which he had drooped over his yet vibrating harp, one or two addressed him, kindly, by name—he made no answer—they touched him—he was dead !—his worn out spirit had expired with the last burst of its enthusiasm.

This unlooked-for circumstance, of course, threw a gloom over the whole party ; the corpse was removed silently and solemnly : at the same moment a stranger entered the lower end of the hall, clad in a hooded tunic, the whole of which, together with his tight-fitting hosen, were covered with tegulated lozenges of blue steel ;—he walked up the

whole length of the room, scarcely noticed by any—he stood before the King's seat—and said with a loud voice—"Hail! only King of Eangland!"

Knute started: it was Edric Streona; he came to announce the death of Edmund, who, two days before, had been shockingly murdered at Oxford.—Edric made the communication in an under tone to the King, and when it was concluded, the latter rose, and said aloud—

"And, my lord, thou thinkest to have some reward for this deed—and most fit insooth it is that thou shouldst—never shall it be said that Knute tarried to raise the man, who had helped to lift him to so lofty a seat: I will raise thy head higher than any other lord's in the kingdom.—Eric! (he turned and made a signal to a man, who stood by his side with a ponderous battle-axe)—but spare his head."

The Dane stepped forward, and before the Saxon traitor could anticipate his object, he drove the piked side of the axe far and firmly into his left shoulder. The women shrieked, Edric groaned, and fell—stone-dead.

Knute ordered the body to be instantly taken out, and beheaded—and the head to be exposed upon the uppermost tower of Gloucester Castle: which was done accordingly.

A few more sentences will now dispose of the rest of our characters.

Knute's further history is to be traced in that of our country : Aelfgiva lived with him, as his mistress, for about two years, (having in the mean time borne him a son, who afterwards came to the throne of England, by the name of Hardiknute)—at the end of this period, Knute married her name-sake, more generally known by the Norman form of her name—Emma;—the widow of Ethelred.

Ulfnoth did nothing remarkable during the remainder of his life—and died at what story-books call “a good old age.”

Over Ulf's fate it might almost be as well to draw a curtain—he had some angry words with Knute, one evening, as they were playing at tables, in Denmark : the next morning he was murdered as he entered the church.

Haco's death was like the little we have seen of his life : it occurred within three years after Knute's accession to the undivided kingdom of England.—A Danish army, in which he held a high command, had been sent against their old enemies the Swedes ; and one afternoon, just as he had dined he was told that the foe had made a sudden attack upon their camp—he would not wait to arm himself—vowing it was much too great trouble for a man, who had just eaten his fill—so with nothing on but a silk tunic and cap, he rushed into the middle of the fray, and in less than a minute, received a cross-bow bolt, sheer through his brain.

And Godwin and Goda—were they happy? —No. She loved him, as woman can, (but seldom does) love—and fatal, alas! it usually is for her, when she does so love: her whole heart was devoted to her husband—she felt a diminution of life, when they were apart;—he loved her too as well as his nature would let him love—but, in the words of poor Lovelace, he loved ‘honour more,’—ambition was his god—at its shrine he sacrificed all the kindlier and homelier feelings of his heart: he made not a home of his own hearth—he sought it only as an occasional relief from the intrigues of a court—he came there either excited by success, or chagrined by failure—its quiet was too monotonous for his active mind. Goda’s proud spirit never complained—she knew it could not have made matters better—might have made them worse—and when the news came of the death of their only child,—a lad of fine promise, who riding a restive horse, was drowned in the Thames,—she sickened—fell into a rapid decline—and died.

Godwin married again—a Saxon lady of rank, by whom he had that numerous progeny, that afterwards were so distinguished in the annals of their times: the second of whom sat on the throne, the last of the Saxon kings of England.

Thus end these leaves from English his-

tory—let me add to the term—from an English history, that has passed through the hands of many generations—wherein the reader may have observed the first leaf or two would have been blank, but for the records of private names—of private ties—of private feelings, with which they have been crowded—and sometimes of private incidents and adventures. Then comes the title-page—the same memorials of merely individual interest, inwrought and intermingled with the public topic of the topographer's recording :—and then the preface, perhaps ;—wherein only a note or two of private history are found occasionally in the margin, quite unconnected, or well or ill connected with the national subject, that it accompanies ;—whence these family and unfamiliar records are met rarer and less full—till the reader is left to forget them in the main current of our country's history, wherein he is absorbed. Such methought was this *tale* ; and being such, how shall it fare beneath a *critic's* eye ? Be no critic, reader, but a good fellow—and so for a page or two—farewell.

ALBERIC THE GODLESS.

GENTLE LADIES,

If, as is indeed certain, you shall find the events recorded in the following tale, to be too horrible and seemingly too unnatural, for the belief of your soft breasts, I feel bound, in justice to my humble self, to assure you, that they are not the issue of mine own imagination, (which you might otherwise be disposed to judge harshly of, as capable of producing so unkindly and revolting a history ;) but that they are truly related from the narrative of one who lived in the times, when they happened, namely in the year 1343.

I am, in duty,

Your devoted servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ALBERIC THE GODLESS.

Murder most *foul*, as in the best it is,

But this *most* foul, strange, and unnatural.

Shakespeare.

‘WANT and death!—and damnation to boot!—aye—one mishap over another—so goes it in this cursed world.—Couldn’t the foolish brat, keep away from the water?—Well? there’s one mouth the less to feed.’—(A father was speaking of his child, and was answered by the mother, with “Hush Alberic!” in a tone which even fear and trembling could not make inaudible—‘I say there *is*—one belly the less to fill—and that’s some ease in any case.—What for

dost sit there, woman, weeping and whining at this rate?—will that bring the boy to life again? or canst thou coin thy tears to help us? be still!

The above consolatory speech, was addressed by Alberic the Godless, (for by that surname he was generally known)—a tall, bulky, brawny man—sunken-cheeked, grey-eyed—and (but for a small portion of short-curved grizzled hair at the back and sides) bald headed, who, his arms knit over his chest, and his brow bent over them, was pacing up and down his hall,—to his wife Bertha, a woman, seemingly much younger than he, and of singular softness of form and face—though her cheek was quite tintless—and her blue eye *all but* quite rayless—who sat, indeed weeping bitterly, beside the half-dying blaze of a few logs, that very insufficiently occupied the spacious hearth, whereon they had been burning.—

Alberic, who had stopped his stalking to and fro a moment, during the more personal part of his words, which he addressed to Bertha; took another stride at the end of them—and the next he took increased in swiftness—and the next, on that. There was stillness, save the sound of his tread—and utter silence.

Mishaps of one kind or another had, for some time past, been heavily pressing on Alberic. In the war between Ludwic of Bavaria, the fifth Emperor of that name, and the house

of Bohemia, he had fought as a paid soldier, on the side of the former; but that war, not lasting more than one year, gave Alberic no means of acquiring any rich booty, which had been his strongest motive for joining in it. He still, however, remained for two more years in the pay of the Emperor, who,—both from the troublous state of his affairs at home, and the necessity of keeping a strict watch upon the movements of Pope Benedict the Seventh, his intriguing enemy,—found it advisable to keep up a large standing army: at the end, however, of those two years, by the influence of France, and the consequent “Constitution of Frankfort,” a peace was established, on so firm a footing, that the Emperor felt he might safely disband his army; and Alberic, who had originally expended large sums for his outfit, and saved nothing, returned home, discontented enough at his ill luck. But this was only the beginning of it: in order to raise ready money at his departure, he had been forced to mortgage a good part of his very small domain, and now at his return, he was wholly incapable of redeeming the land thus pledged:—he was unable to do it by fair means, namely by paying off the principal and interest of the loan,—for want of money;—and, although he certainly would have had few scruples of repossessing himself of his former property by foul means, namely, forcibly eject-

ing the then rightful tenants, he was also unable to do this, for he had pledged his land to the rich burghers of the neighbouring town of Eisenstadt, who, besides their own strength, were backed and supported by the most powerful of the surrounding nobles,—so that Alberic felt any attempt to regain his land by force would but frustrate itself.—He remained for some time at home, in the absence of other pursuits, occupying himself sullenly and savagely, either in the chase,—or at the head of a few followers, in committing some petty, but generally from their attendant circumstances, *cruel* depredations on remote villages, and wealthy but unprotected individuals: he also, as was the custom with most of the Hungarian lords at that time, gave his attention to farming—or rather, he gave little *attention* thereto—and this succeeded with him as badly, if not worse, than his other employments. After about two years passed in this unprofitable, and often losing manner, a report was spread that the Emperor Ludwig was preparing for a war with Andronicus Palæologus, Emperor of the east; and Alberic on hearing of this, immediately mortgaged more of his land, raised a few more followers, and hastened to Germany, to offer his services to his former chief: before, however, he could arrive at the Imperial court, he discovered that this in sooth had been *only* report; for Ludwig was quite at

rest; and the Eastern Emperor had died meanwhile, quietly in his bed, leaving his empire, and his fourteen hundred hounds, and one thousand hawks, to be disputed for by his infant son, Calo John, and his tutor John Cantacuzen. Alberic, therefore, again returned home, more dissatisfied and dispirited than ever: here too ill news awaited him; during his absence, a vast herd of Asiatics, known at the time, indiscriminately by the name of Tartars or Pagans, had made a furious and destructive inroad into Hungary, and the neighbouring province of Cracow: they had come in such a numerous and enormous mass, as to bear down all opposition, and indeed as to be altogether incredible, were it not for the corresponding testimony of the chronicles of the age; one of whom, having suggested, that they had been driven from their own country by the ravages of locusts, adds, that wherever they now came, 'they did as their destroyers had done unto them.' Although Alberic's domain lay at the utmost western extremity of the kingdom, it had not been exempt from a visit by these barbarians, who carried away the corn and cattle, and every thing of a portable and consumable nature that was found on the estate; and Alberic, on his return, would probably have found neither wife, bordar, or vassal there, to tell him the tale, had not Bertha, on the first news of the approach of the

Pagans, fled with all her lord's dependants to the fortified town of Eisenstadt ; where they remained safe till after the ever-shifting foe had retreated. They were soon after driven from Hungary by a regular croisade, got up in that and the neighbouring kingdoms for the very purpose.

All this domestic calamity was but bad news to tell a man, whose temper, never of the sweetest, was now, by repeated disappointments, soured beyond measure—told him however it was—and he received it as might be expected, storming and cursing at his gentle wife and his vassals, as if they had been able to prevent the mischief that had befallen him. Storming and cursing however would do nothing to repair the mischief—fresh corn was to be procured—other cattle were to be purchased ; (for in those times every owner of a castle, or a farm—indeed every one not residing in a town, who had enough land for the purpose, kept a baking and butchering establishment of his own, which was useful at all times, and needful at many ; especially when the country should be in a state of war ; as at such a period, all market towns, which were usually fortified, were difficult and precarious of access.) To obtain these necessaries, money was to be got—and to get that, more land was to be sold.—As soon as all this was arranged a murrain broke out in that part of the kingdom ;

which carried off the greatest part of Alberic's cattle :—this was followed by a scarcity, which as it, of course, made all provisions very dear, was, of course, also most severely felt by the needy, among whom Alberic saw himself on the rapid road of being classed :—he had no money—and no means of getting enough for arming and supporting sufficient followers, to enable him again to venture upon his former predatory excursions—and they had never been so certain or successful as to entice any to follow him therein, upon the mere *chance* of plunder :—his castle was allowed to fall into ruins—only part of it was kept in a habitable state, and that but barely so—of this, except the sleeping rooms, only the hall was really occupied, and that was in a most wretched condition : the rough-hewn black oak floor was here and there hardly covered with stale and nearly rotten rushes—in parts, where there was the greatest thoroughfare, these had been trodden to bits, and, mingled with the dirt and mud from the feet of incomers, had formed a hard earthy incrustation ;—at one end, where once the *Deis* had been, some rudely-constructed perches had been erected, as a temporary asylum for a few hawks, the last tenants of a once extensive falconry, from which they had been removed, owing to its having fallen into utter disrepair ;—the tapestry that hung

upon the walls, tarnished more by dust and smoke than age, and fringed with thousands of dusky cobwebs, was rent and tattered in many places—and in some wholly fallen from its holdings :—above the black rafters, the roof was broken in several parts—and through these openings, and the uncovered crevices in the walls, and the many shivered squares in the deep oriel windows, came the evening March wind, murmuring and moaning, as Alberic, in the manner already written, paced up and down that old desolate-looking hall.—He had been out in the morning hawking—and returning, late in the afternoon, was met with the news that his only child, a lad just entered his seventh year, had been found drowned in the lake, upon the brink of which his castle stood.

We have seen the brutal manner in which he upbraided the unhappy mother of his boy, for giving way to her natural grief upon this occasion—and we may well suppose that grief was not lessened by what he then said to her ; nevertheless Bertha did endeavour to restrain her tears, and check her sobs, at the bidding of her husband—she did more than endeavour—she *did* what she was bidden.—After another turn or two Alberic sat down on a stool opposite his wife, and looked her sternly in the face ; her eyes, as soon as they met his, shrank from them, and again filled and ran over with

tears; he kept his firmly fixed upon her face however; and after a minute's such pause he continued in a sneering tone—

‘Why—’tis all for the best—*that* thou knowest—does not thy confessor teach and preach thee, that *all* is for the best?—good, bad, and indifferent—all for the best?—’m? Isn’t that the priest’s creed?—’m?—Answer me, Bertha?’ he cried, changing his tone to one of high anger—and striking his hand on the table before him.

“What shall I answer thee, Alberic? Remember, for God’s sake, I am a mother, and have lost mine only child,” and now her tears ran again uncontrolled.

‘Well—and am not I a father? and have not I lost *mine* only child?—at least for all thou knowest:—but no—I lie—and thou liest—we are neither father nor mother now—either of us—the child’s dead—and there’s an end on’t:—and I say again ’tis all for the best—not because the canting priest says so—but because I believe it *is* so—sons and fathers are better parted than together:—he might have lived to have been a curse to his father—or I to him—as my father has been to me:—Death and hell!’ he continued, rising and again pacing to and fro—‘and for it—may the curse of curses cling to..’

“Oh! Alberic! Alberic! for the love of Heaven think what thou art about to say—”

‘Think! I *know* what I am about to say—to curse him—heavily and heartily to curse him—did he not curse me?—oh! no—no—I remember—he did not—he—he did not, and would not—hoo! hoo! he did not curse me—he only sent me forth on the world—pennyless—but for the pittance, that the law of the land forced him to allow me—me, his eldest son—while my dear brothers were kept at home, to be lapped and coddled in luxury—me—he drove forth to beggary—to shame—to—hoo! hoo! and when I came to his gate—to crave his forgiveness—and his pity—and his—his help—he wouldn’t hear me—he wouldn’t see me—I was ordered away as a common tramper would not have been—but he never *cursed* me—oh! no—he was too *good* a man—too pious a father, to *curse* his son—oh! for one day—one hour—nay, one little minute of revenge—of simple requital. —Well! well! well!’—and his voice died away into an inaudible mutter.—After another short silence, only interrupted by his rapid and heavy tread up and down the hall, he suddenly cried out with great bitterness—‘And this brawling, and the wretchedness it has brought, are all along of that baby-face of thine.’

“Pray, Alberic, say not so; I cannot bear it.”

‘Why now what is this? did I say I hated thee for it?—did I even say I had left loving thee?—have I said *that* yet?—though by the

mighty Devil that I truly believe is within me, methinks thou wouldst aggravate me to say some such thing—with all this puling and blubbing—it sickens me: I say again this wretchedness is along of thee: because I *would* wed thee in the teeth and spite of them all—father and friends—kith and kin—because I would not have my will thwarted by their inveterate attachment to an hereditary feud, or some such cursed foolery—this was the cause—and what was that cause then, but thou?—’m? Answer me—dost thou not see thou *wert* the cause of this evil?—answer me, I say.’

“Indeed, Alberic, thou makest it seem so.”

‘What’s that?—*make* and *seem*—dost thou mean then that it is not so?—come; speak out, and speak the truth.’

“Why, then, Alberic, thou must remember that thy father’s wrath was so enkindled against thee, because thou liftedest thy hand against him.”

‘Oho! did I?—well! and what cause thinkest thou I had? it was thy quarrel I was fighting, mistress: it was because he was obstinately opposed that I should have thee to wife—therefore was it that we wrangled—and therefore was it that I lifted my hand against him—but I did not strike him—like a fool or a coward—it was better though for his sake I did not—for I do not want, and did not then, to lift my hand—*alone*—’

A pause of some length followed.

‘By the way,’ at last said Alberic, ‘what was that, Bertha, thou wert telling me some time ago—I forget when, for I did not much heed thee—about having seen his herdsman—my worthy father’s I mean—go by with some cattle?—’m? what was it?’

“Oh! it is now near a month ago, I think, that it happened—or more, may be:—shall I tell thee of it?”

‘Yes, to be sure.’

“I was walking along the Eisenstadt road, coming homewards, and was met by a large drove of cattle. I got on one side to let them pass, and the herdsman, I suppose, thinking we were terrified—”

‘Thou wert not alone then?’

“No, Alberic,” she replied, and then added, “Poor Hubert was with me—”

‘Oh!—well—go on—what did the herdsman?’

“He was very civil—and got between us and the cattle—to keep them as far off as he could; when he came close to us, he looked hard in Hubert’s face—and, begging my forgiveness, asked if he—if he were my child—” Bertha bit her lip, and had clearly great difficulty to refrain from bursting into tears.

‘Well?’

“I told him—yes—that he was—and the man said he would gage then that he was the grandchild of his lord—he was so like him—”

‘Thank God, *I* never saw the likeness—did he ask my name?’

“He said it himself; and asked if I were thy wife—I told him I was—and that thou wert the boy’s father—”

‘Hum! — — And for what on earth can *mine* be sending cattle all this away from beyond the Donau? had this fellow come straight from Gyøngyœs?’

“Yes—and he told me that—that the Lord of Gyœn Castle. .”

“My father—that is:—speak out—don’t mince the matter—I can’t *help* his being my father—what of him and his oxen?’

“That they were on the road to the Austrian Baron of Mœlk’s castle: as part payment of a large debt contracted by thy father to the Baron, whom they met a long while ago at Pesth.”

‘Oho! the Baron of Mœlk—I know him.—So that the Lord of Gyœn is in trouble as well as other folk.’

“Indeed I fear so.”

‘Fear!—Now is that simple cant—or said wholly to vex me? fear! what is there to *fear* about the matter? when it is a thing to hope for, or to rejoice at — — — aye, now; do—do—they become thee well, these sullen sulks—do try them—’

“Alberic, my husband,” said Bertha, in a

gentle but firm tone, rising too from her seat, and drawing herself up to her full height—“after what manner am I to deal with thee? can I please thee in nothing?—are all my endeavours to be thus, *harshly* I must say, harshly and cruelly slighted?—my tears offend thee—I stop them;—my words anger thee—I am silent;—and then my silence is sullenness.—Before God and his blessed Mother, thou dost not treat me well.—Oh! Hubert, my child—now I have lost thee, I see I have lost every hold on thy father’s heart—Oh! my son! would to God I had died with thee, oh, Hubert—my son—my son!”—and uttering this (probably unintentional) paraphrase of the most pathetic exclamation—one excepted—that has ever been recorded—with her hands before her face, that was soon bathed in tears—and half choking with sobs, she sank again upon her seat.

‘High-day and holy!—How now?’—cried her brutal lord and tyrant, utterly unmoved by either her appeal or her grief; though the former seemed at first greatly to astonish him, as he stopped suddenly in his walk, and stared at her with widely distended eyes—and that time hers met his, and did not flinch from them, till the thought of her son came across her,—‘Ah! I thought after this thunder-clap, we should have a good shower:—my troth fair dame, but this *is* something new—and per-

haps though I ought to cherish it for the very sake of its novelty—any thing new between us were a blessing.’

“I will leave thee, Alberic, good night.” She rose to depart.

‘Thou shalt do no such thing—stay here, and set thee down again.’ She obeyed—‘Hoo! hoo!—I see the drift of all this—see it plainly, my lady;—thou wouldst provoke me past my bearing—thou wouldst drive me to some hopelessly rash deed on thee—but thou shalt not—mistress—thou shalt not have thy wretched will—no—by the Arch-devil of hell thou shalt not—’ it was lucky for her that the gathering, and ungovernable storm, which was blackening on his brow, and lightening from his eyes, met with another object, that directed its fury, or it is likely he would have broken his word at the very time he was giving it;—for suddenly stopping before the hawk perches, he cried out—‘Why—what in all the other devils’ names is this?—they have put Helen to roost with her jesses on—by St. Paul!—the cursed curs!—Sohoh! bird! sohhoh! Helen! rouse—rouse—whew—whew!—whew!—hillih—hoh—come—down to wrist—whew! whew!’—and thus calling and whistling the hawk, he raised his left arm for her to light on; but, whether she was tired with her morning’s work, or felt at any rate very comfortable where she was, and no wise inclined to change her perch, she only

opened one of her keen black eyes, and fixed it very composedly on her master, but stirred not.—

‘Come down, I say, fool! hillih—ho, hoh!—down! and be damned to thee—!’ and, with his left hand still raised, he waved impatiently with the other to dare her from her roost: the bird accordingly flew off, but not towards him; and, yet more exasperated by this, Alberic caught the leash that she trailed after her, and with a violent jerk, brought her to the ground; where she lay screaming, struggling, and fluttering, but unable to take flight again.

“Thou hast hurt the poor bird, Alberic,” said his wife, forgetful of her own sorrows, and indeed of her prudence, for the moment she made this remark—

‘And what an I have?—what is it to thee? hast thou not matters enough of thine own to care for, without meddling with this ramage fowl?—or shall I give thee some worth caring for?—Sohoh! brute!’ said he, turning and stooping to pick up the hawk—‘thou’lt turn haggard wilt thou?—hoo! hoo!—oh! kick and scratch and peck—do—ah! beast!—come, stand!—oh! canst not?—or wilt not? So then’—and saying this, he wrung the neck of the poor animal he had already crippled—Bertha hissingly drew in her breath, and shuddering, said, in a

tone scarcely to be heard—"Oh, God! how shocking!"

But her husband *did* hear her, and turning sharply round upon her, he cried—"Shocking—dost thou find it? poor dainty thing—thou art easily shocked :—there—" flinging the body of the hawk close to her upon the table—"mayhap thou wilt embalm the dead brute with thy tears; as they flow from thee so readily.—Once and for all, my lady, this shall not do: I warn thee—thou knowest how I am plagued and harrassed—and my solemn belief is, that thou doest all thou canst to harrass and plague me the more—but I tell thee it shall not do—leave this place we must—and the curse of God rest upon it—but methinks it were as well we do not leave it together."—Bertha started at this announcement, — it seemed the only drop wanting to fill up the cup of her bitter anguish: Alberic noted her start of surprise, and to cancel the consciousness of his own brutality, that forced itself upon his selfish heart, he continued—his tone rising to a roar, and gnawing at his knuckles till he almost peeled the skin from them—"I will not be crossed by thee for ever in this way—I will not, by my soul—it is thy delight—thy sport to cross me—it is—but it shall not be—I will bear it no longer—for, as sure as my name is Alberic—as sure as I am named the Godless—I will show I merit the name—I will

—now, rascal ! what dost thou stand there gaping for ?—flies ?”

This was addressed to a boardar, or domestic, who stood at the entrance of the hall, gaping indeed with astonishment at the exhibition of passion he beheld ; not, to be sure, that it was a rare occurrence to see his lord in a passion—even with his wife ; but this present fit seemed so to surpass any thing of the kind that he had ever before witnessed ; considering too the events of that day, which had left his master childless, and it might have been supposed, would something have subdued and tamed him ;—so that the servant, who came to bear a common-place announcement to his master, had been quite paralyzed with wonder and an instinctive fear—and had stood for more than a minute at the door before Alberic saw him.

It was not until another demand of what he wanted had been thundered at him, that the man stammered out there was a stranger—a wanderer at the gate—an old man, who craved a night’s refreshment and rest.

‘ A beggar ?’ interrupted Alberic.

“ He seems so, my lord,” answered the boardar.

‘ What does one beggar at the gate of another ?—oh, aye : like and like are fond of herding—well, give the mendicant his need.’ For contrary as it may seem to Alberic’s cha-

racter, which it is humbly presumed the reader by this time has formed no very favourable opinion of, he had no notion of refusing the rites of hospitality, to any one who asked them at his door: in these rude times indeed hospitality was rather considered as a custom, than a virtue, or perhaps than even a duty; and there can be little doubt that Alberic the Godless saw it not in either of the latter lights, or probably he had not exercised it so readily.

‘Now? have I not said?’ he added, as the bordar still lingered at the hall-door. ‘What more?’

“May it please you, my lord, the stranger would speak, he said, either with your lordship or her ladyship.”

‘Speak with me!—what should the old tramper have to speak with me?—is he a common man?’

“Quite so, my lord,” answered the domestic, but perhaps the reader, especially if he or she love a little mystery, will not give him credit for much discrimination in such matters.

‘Pshaw! some chapman in relics, and such-like mummery, I will gage my word:—I have nought to speak with him—he has brought his merchandize to a wrong market—or, stay: thy goodly dame here belike will traffic with him: thou lovest such gear, I know, Bertha: wilt

thou not commune with this holy pelegrine, and let thyself be cozened out of a little of our superabundant wealth in change for some of his inestimable trumpery?’

This was said in a tone of bitter sarcasm; and Bertha, rising from her seat, said meekly, “If it be thy wish, my husband, I will go speak with the wanderer.”

‘*My wish! there’s woman all over; I say, if it be thy wish—and thou retortest with—if it be mine.—I have no wish about the thing.*’

“Neither have I then,” said Bertha, quietly resuming her seat.

‘There! woman again! peevishness and stubbornness at every turn:—Go! and speak with the man,’ he added loudly and angrily.

Bertha rose to depart, but before she could reach the door, her limbs trembled and tottered so, that she would have fallen had it not been for the timely support of a high-backed chair, against which she leant for a moment.

‘Halloo!’ cried Alberic impatiently—and Bertha with an effort, recovered her strength, and left the hall, followed by the wondering menial.

Alberic was now left alone with his bad passion and his bitter feelings; and strange, and strong was their influence over him; he continued for some time walking hastily up and down; inwardly, and sometimes utteringly, cursing and quarrelling with every thing

and body that came athwart his thoughts, himself among the number, and by no means in the least degree. Gradually his step became less hasty, his brow less rigid, his mind less disturbed; and as the storm therein began to abate, the "still small voice" became distinct and powerful; then, as if to drown it, Alberic again poured forth the flood of his fury; and his brow again wrinkled, and his step again quickened, and he burst out into exclamation: 'Wretched indeed—most wretched—I have made her—and myself too—I made her so? Fool! dolt! to ascribe the invincible and irresistible workings of fate to thy influence!—That fate, or that hell, of which thou wert but the passive tool. Have I not striven? oh God!—but no, not to thee—not to thee—rather to the Fiends of evil let me appeal—have I not striven and struggled with you? long and fearlessly have I not? aye, and often mastered you—for *her* sake, and his, that is no more—have I done so; but never for mine own—and never, oh! never to any good avail—for no sooner have I driven you from one strong hold than ye have come again, and attacked me where I was weakest; and there have ye established and strengthened yourselves—for one ill avoided, ten temptations have ever assailed me. Ye have done this,—and ye have triumphantly done it—till ye have made me a wretch, a

devil like yourselves—with a fiery hell in the place of heart—for there is nothing *here*,—nothing *here*, but hell! (clutching up the skin of his chest, even through his strong leathern doublet, and convulsively dragging it from one side to the other). This ye have made me—and more—and worse; and why have ye done so? *Why?* By what right have ye thus enslaved me, who would not be your servant? Answer me—appear to me—though your sight blast me—why have ye made me what I am? a hater of myself and of my kind—a hater of her—her who loved me so—whom I so loved—and now—death!—so—almost loathe.’—

After several altercations of such violent and overpowering feelings, the most of which *were* felt only, and not uttered, he at last sat down on a stool, the one his wife had just before occupied; and, flinging his arms cross-ways on the table, and his head on his left arm, Alberic—Alberic the Godless—the stern ruthless Alberic—wept.

Many and manifold are the fountains of tears, that lie within the human heart. There are tears of sorrow, and there are tears of joy; but their founts lie almost upon its surface, and in the spring-time of youth, readily gush forth, and are often soon drained: happy are those whose eyes know only these;—even happy if they know only the former of them: but there

are other tears, whose sources lie deeper, and whose streams rise not, till the heart, that holds them, be shaken by some mighty convulsion; tears of anguish and of horror; tears of rage, of hate, of remorse, of hopelessness; and bitter and burning are all of these:—but their bitterness and their burning, are as honey and oil, compared with those tears, that spring not forth, until the heart, that has been all but shattered with its throes, sinks into torpor and numbness; till, as it were, its very foundations having been rent in sunder by shock after shock, the agitation subsides, and then flow these—most terrible—tears; neither of anguish, nor of horror; nor of rage, hate, remorse, nor hopelessness—but a commingling and confusion of them all, without one drop of sweetness or of balm to alloy them—easing not—relieving not—aiding not. Such were the tears, that now, heavily and hotly, like molten metal, swelled and dropped from the eyes of Alberic.—

As he lay thus, weeping, he was suddenly startled by a rustling at his left ear; and at the same moment feeling his hair griped and violently plucked at,—with an outcry of wonder he started up and perceived that the circumstance had been occasioned by the hawk, which, some minutes back, he had flung for dead upon the table, and close to which, without perceiving it, he had lain down his head:—the bird,

though mortally hurt, had not been killed outright, and had now just recovered from its stupefaction, to make some of those painful convulsions, which almost invariably attend the parting of life from the animal frame.—Alberic watched the creature's struggles for a moment or so—and then pushing it off the table, said: 'Poor devil! I did not mean thee to linger so long,'—and at the same time he placed his heavy iron heel upon the bird's head, and crushed out its brain.—

Just as he had done this deed of apathetic kindness, Bertha re-entered the hall. — Her husband was struck by the singular appearance of her face, which, though it could not be paler than usual, now wore a hue and look thoroughly corpse-like.

'Bertha;' said Alberic, in a tone approaching almost to gentleness—'what ails thee?'

"Nought ails me, Alberic, nought at least to speak of—I came to tell thee of—" and she sank nearly swooning on a seat.—

"Come—come—be not foolish, woman,"—and this was not said angrily, though rather peevishly.—

"Bear with me—a second or so, Alberic—and I shall be better:—there, I *am* better.—Oh! Alberic—pray, hear my tidings calmly.—"

'Well—well?' replied her husband, getting impatient.

"I will not delay thee, Alberic—only once

more let me entreat thee—for thine own sake, Alberic, to hear—and to bear my tidings calmly and firmly—and—”

Alberic began to show visible signs of impatience.—

“I came to tell thee, Alberic,—that the stranger—the poor old weary wanderer—that he is—dear Alberic—it is thy father, Alberic.”—

She sank down on her knees, cowering at his feet, her hands timidly clasped over her bosom, and her eyes raised imploringly and anxiously to his face, to mark what effect her news should have on him.—

And it was a fearful sight to look on. The moment before he had stood with his brows bent and lowered over his eyes, his teeth gnawing the corner of his nether lip, his arms crossed, the left clenched firmly by his right hand, while on the right arm he beat rapidly with the fingers of the other hand, as also with the fore-part of his right foot upon the floor; but at the utterance of the simple word “*Father*” all this was changed; he started a little back, stopping the movement of his hand and foot, raising his brows, and opening his eyes and mouth, his whole face at the same time flushing darkly; and *thus* he remained—seemingly stiffened to a statue—for full a minute:—then, as if he had been collecting breath for

the effort, he screamed out—‘What? who? my—*my* Father! and in *my* house?’—

“Yes—Alberic—but oh! be patient.”

‘The—the stranger? the beggar that—that came but now—my father?’ said Alberic with the same look and tone.

“Indeed, yes.”

Alberic’s features and posture again changed, but not so rapidly as before:—the former became gradually pale, livid;—his brows were again drawn together, making so many wrinkles on his forehead, that it assumed a positive hue of blackness; his teeth were firmly set;—his arms unfolded themselves, and dropped listlessly by his side, his hands clenched: then he drew them, slowly and almost imperceptibly up to his breast—and then flung them wide out, and shouted, at the utmost pitch of his voice—‘Bertrand! what ho! Bertrand!’—

“Oh Alberic, what wilt thou do?” cried the frightened Bertha, who had watched every movement of her husband, with the utmost distress and anxiety: but he gave no heed to her—and repeated his shout for Bertrand. It was answered by the appearance of a man, so short in stature, that he might seem a dwarf, especially when seen by the side of Alberic’s almost gigantic figure:—the effect of his shortness was increased too, by the great thickness

and brawniness of his body, as well as by his stooping a good deal forward; and this latter habit gave a wild character to his strongly marked countenance, as his black shining eyes were seldom visible to others, except when partially seen glancing up through the thick and shaggy brows, that projected over them.

Alberic immediately addressed thus his favourite familiar—"Bertrand—there is without, Bertrand—a stranger—and alms-beggar, Bertrand;—bring him hither—quick."

Bertrand retired.

"Oh! I fear for thee, Alberic," said Bertha.

"Bertha—thou art not well: and this meeting might harry thee—get to bed, Bertha."

"Nay—nay—I beseech thee—let me—do let me stay here."

"No, I say: thou art ill—and rest were good for thee—and besides it is my wish—my *will* that thou go."

Bertha had shown a disposition to linger, tempted therefore by the mild, and even feeling manner, in which her husband had uttered the middling part of the last sentence; but the quick change of his voice and manner, when he saw that disposition, convinced her that all opposition to his will would be worse than useless, and therefore, saying aloud—"God then guard thee, Alberic," and adding a prayer in her mind, that he would guard his father too, with tears in her eyes, and a heavy heart,

and a tottering step, she left the hall by a side door. The poor lady was indeed very ill.

Alberic had only returned her parting benediction with a muttered 'good night,' and remained motionless, his eyes eagerly fixed on the principle entrance of the hall. Presently appeared there the objects of his attention—Bertrand, ushering a grey-headed and bearded man, much wrinkled and nearly bent double with age.

Bertrand, pointing to Alberic, gruffly grumbled, "Yon's the Lord."

The old man tottered towards the table on the further side of which stood his son, leaning thereon with his wrist and upturned doubled hand upon it. A pause followed.

'Light ! light !' at length cried Alberic ; and Bertrand went to fetch it.

Twilight had fallen, and though it was not yet dark enough to prevent two persons, standing so near together as did Alberic and his father, from plainly discerning each the other's face ; yet it was, on the other hand, not light enough to allow either distinctly to see the workings of the other's features. After another short pause the old man said, "The father waits...."

'A little longer,' interrupted Alberic, 'wait a little longer an it please you, Sir. I would see with whom I speak.'

They waited accordingly till Bertrand re-

turned, bearing a large iron lamp lighted, which he set down on the table between the father and son. They gazed on one another steadily, and Alberic never removed his gaze, as with one hand he impatiently motioned Bertrand to quit the hall. He did so, and closed the door after him, and Alberic and his father were alone together.

Still they continued gazing on one another in silence, and without motion—except that Alberic swayed slightly on one side, so that the flare of the lamp might not intercept his direct view of the old man, and his upper lip also separated slowly from the nether one, and curled into a shocking smile.

At length Albert of Gyœn said to his son, “I will seat me, Alberic, for I am weary.”

Alberic made a scarcely perceptible bend with his head, and the old man sat down.

In about a minute he again took up the speech, and said, “And how long then *shall* the father wait, ere the son speak to him?”

‘*I waited for you, Sir,*’ answered Alberic in a trembling and stifled tone, ‘what would you with me?’

“I am in need, Alberic, great need and trouble: my estate is lowered to very beggary.”

‘And how might this have come, Sir?’ asked Alberic, in the same tone as before.

“Oh! it were long to tell now—long and tedious.”

‘Yet would I fain hear it, Sir.’

“Alas! what can it avail thee to hear of thy father’s mishaps and woes and sufferings—all alike unmerited?”

‘Indeed?—still methinks I fain *would* hear them.’

“They have been heavy, Alberic, and their heaviness hath crushed me to the earth—whence I can now—old and feeble as I am—never hope to rise.”

‘But you say not of what kind they were, Sir.’

“Of *every* kind—of every kind, that *could* afflict a wretched man—war, famine, and sickness—and storms from the skies, and floods from the earth—they have all, and each, and one after the other assaulted me and mine; and then there were debts to pay—and—I am a beggar, Alberic; what boots it *how* I came so? I am a beggar—and I come in mine old age and penury—to crave relief from the son, whom with sorrow I own to have too harshly treated.”—

‘My brothers, sir—my more kindly treated brothers—they have to their utmost relieved you?’

“Woe is me! Alberic, thou hast lived so long estranged from thy family, that thou

knowest not they have all gone before me? all but my brave Ulric."

'And he, sir?—your brave Ulric—he hath done much for you?'

'He is, alas! far away from me—and I know not where—or he, I know would aid me.'

'Go seek him then,' cried Alberic—like a wild beast rousing from a snarl into a roar of rage—'seek him till thou find him—but hence—away from me.'

"Alberic, I am thy father."

'I know it—why mind me of it, that I may the sooner drive thee hence—by the black North! this very night only was I wishing for such a moment of requital as this. Hence! ere I spurn thee hence.'

"I gave thee life, and wilt thou refuse me the means of living? give me coin, that I may not starve for food."

'Not a pfenning—not a heller.'

"Son—son! wilt thou send forth thy father hopeless as homeless."

'Aye will I—as that father sent forth me—begone.'

"Give me then—I saw, as I neared thy gate, thy kine standing in a shed—give me at least one of them, that I may have wherewithal somewhat to relieve my want."

'Hoo! hoo! hoo! I tell thee, old grey-beard, did I see thee lying at my gate—starving—I

would not help thee—no, not with a peck of padar. Hah! art thou lifting thy palsied hands to heaven to pray a curse on me.’

“No, no—I did not curse thee when my heart was hard, and my pride was high—and I will not curse thee now that grief and care have lowered the one, and softened the other. I will not curse thee—no—I raise my hands to call Him to witness, that it is urged by need of *hunger*, I am driven to rob men of their goods.”

‘Aha! I care not. Rob not me.’

A momentary fire lit the old noble’s eye. The wrath of a proud self-will heightened his figure a moment, and knit his brow—it passed—he trembled and answered, “That God witness—since I *am* put to it, I ought rather to rob from thee, who hast both goods and body, after God, through me.”*

‘Ha! sayst thou? mark me then yet ere thou go—if thou withdraw or pilfer any—be it never so little—of my property—as sure as I live and breathe at this moment, I will follow thee to the death therefor.’

Even while Alberic was uttering this unnatural threat, his father, who had risen before he last spoke, left the hall; Alberic followed him to the door, and thence watched him go

* This sentence, together with some other passages, is literally translated from the Latin Chronicler.

along the vaulted passage, and out at the porch. When he was out of sight, Alberic applied a small silver whistle to his lips and blew, and Bertrand immediately came to him from one of the many side doors in the passage.

‘Bertrand,’ said Alberic, ‘thou seest yonder beggar?’

“Aye, Lord,” was the dependant’s short and surly answer.

‘And knewest him?’

Bertrand jerked his head more forward than usual, in token of assent.

‘For whom? speak out.’

“Lord of Gyæn.”

‘It is so—now heed me—I will have thee follow him—he hath even now left the porch: he hath threatened to rob me, Bertrand: follow him therefore, closely but cautiously, and bring me back word what, if any thing, thou seest him take, and then what road he goes.’

Without any further remark Bertrand left the castle, and Alberic turned again into the hall: up and down which he again began pacing as before, but in utter silence. To attempt to describe the feelings, which at present rioted in his heart, would be about as hopeless a task, as for a painter to endeavour the delineation of Chaos, ere a beam of light, had yet been created to shine therein: for all

in Alberic's heart was equally black, confused, and jarring.

After the lapse of some time the old nurse of the household entered the hall, and informed him that her mistress was truly dangerously ill. At the first sound of her step and voice, Alberic started and looked at her, but the next moment turned away, and seemed no longer to notice her.

The old woman repeated her announcement again, but it was still unheeded.—

She tried a third time :—" I'm thinking your lordship hears me not—our lady, sir, is sore ill at ease, both in body and soul—and might be—as were but natural—you would wish to—"

' To hell with thee—old crone—and her on thy back, an thou will :—leave me, alone.'

The poor old creature needed no second bidding of the latter part of her master's order, and hobbled from the hall as hastily as she could.—

Alberic continued pacing—till, although the night was chill enough, and the fire was dead, and the wind blew in from so many openings, the hall seemed to him so close and sweltry, that he left it, to walk up and down before the porch, where he awaited Bertrand's return—nothing noticing the drizzly rain that fell on his uncovered head.—

Not long after, Bertrand did return, some-

what hastily, and, on perceiving his master, stopped short.

‘How?—well! what news? good or bad?’ said Alberic, hurriedly.

‘H’m!—can’t tell, Lord,” answered Bertrand.

‘Can’t tell! why—can’st thou not tell what thou hast seen?’

“Yes, sure.”

‘Well; didst thou follow my father, as I bade thee?’

“Aye, Lord.”

‘And what did he?—took he aught?’ for Alberic was well aware of his vassal’s uncommunicative propensity, never to speak but directly to questions.

“A cow.”

‘Oho!’ shouted the inhuman monster. ‘Good—good—better could not be.—And the road—which road took he?’

“South, Lord.”

‘My horse! this moment—and thou and Waltheof mount too and with me—hurry! hurry!’

Alberic himself went with them to the stable, to assist in the sooner saddling the horses; and in very few minutes, they were all three mounted, and off at full gallop along the south road from the castle.—They very soon overtook the feeble old man, who, as Bertrand had reported, had, indeed, led away with him one of his son’s kine.—

‘Seize him—seize the thief,’ cried Alberic, and his order was on the instant executed.—‘You have kept word with me, Sir;’ he continued, addressing his father—‘and ’twere unjust if I kept it not with you.—Mount him behind thee, Bertrand; and, Waltheof, thou follow to Eisenstadt with the beast.’

“Thou wilt not deal by me thus, Alberic;” said the father.

‘Mount—mount, sir; we will speak together anon;’ and the rapidity with which they rode to the town prevented any further communication.

They arrived at the town gates.—

‘Open—open,’ cried Alberic—‘I bring a thief to justice.’

The gates were accordingly opened to them—and they rode straight to the Buerghermeister’s house. The town laws not permitting any horsemen to go through the streets at a quicker pace than a walk, Alberic kept a-head, so as to prevent any possibility of conversation with his father.

Arriving at the buerghermeister’s door, Alberic dismounted and knocked—and leaving his horse with Bertrand, was ushered by a servant into his master’s presence.—

The Buerghermeister was an elderly man, turned fifty, and yet, seemingly still on the sunny side of it, with long silvery hair, and features, to which a high unwrinkled forehead,

a mild blue eye, and a finely moulded mouth gave an expression of great suavity : and yet it was well known, that Buerghermeister Hartdorf could be needfully severe, when occasion called for severity : and he was, and most deserved so, revered by all his fellow Buerghers, and the neighbouring nobles and landholders, for his strict and impartial justice : but with Alberic, he had hitherto had little intercourse.

‘ I am Alberic, your neighbour.’

“ I know you, Lord Alberic— I pray you, be seated—you come to me, doubtless, on business ?”

‘ I do, Lord Buerghermeister ; I come for a warrant to the town Stockmeister, to receive a culprit, whom I have just caught stealing my cattle.’

“ Indeed ! have you the culprit in your keeping ?”

‘ My servant has him in charge at your gate.’

“ You have witness to the theft ?”

‘ I do not think it will be needed ; for most likely, the accused will not deny the charge :— nevertheless, I have enough witness.’

“ And you will bring your plaint to-morrow ?”

‘ To-night—if it were possible.’

“ But that cannot be, you know, Lord Alberic.”

‘ Then to-morrow : early—’

The Buerghermeister wrote on a slip of parchment, and said, handing it over to Alberic—"There is a warrant then to the Stockmeister to hold the prisoner in strict custody, for four-and-twenty hours, at the end of which time, unless you shall have begun your plaint, he will be free from charge or scathe."

'Trust me,' said Alberic rising, 'I shall not be slack, Lord Burghermeister—good night—sleep well.'

The Buerghermeister having returned his greeting, Alberic left him—and rejoined his vassal and his prisoner.

'Has he spoken with thee, Bertrand?' asked Alberic, as he mounted into the saddle.

"No, Lord."

'Follow me then,' and again taking the lead, he proceeded to the town jail; where he delivered the warrant and his father to the keeper, or Stockmeister, and saying to the former, 'We shall meet to-morrow, sir,'—he rode off with Bertrand.

A little way beyond the town, they met Waltheof leading the cow: 'Thou may'st take her back to her stall, now;' said Alberic,—"*her* witness will not be wanted; but *thine* will, knave; of how, and in whose company we found the jade again—so see—thou be at the Rathhouse, the first thing the morrow.'

As soon as Alberic arrived at his castle, he said to Bertrand, flinging him the reins of his

horse :—‘Thy witness, of course, will be most needed, Bertrand, so hold thyself in readiness to ride with me to the town early : and see too that I do not oversleep myself, though ’tis not very likely I should, with such an affair on my mind :—I shall not to bed, but lay me on one of the benches of the hall.”

He entered the hall ; but kept walking up and down it, a long time before he put his purpose in execution : and even after he had lain down, it was long before he fell asleep : he had not been so for five minutes, when he dreamt that he was standing on the top of the high rock, whereon his castle was built, overhanging a dark deep lake—that his wife was by his side, moaning over the shrouded body of their dead son—that as he strove to check her, she crept under the shroud, and thoroughly hid herself—that of a sudden the corpse started up,—and it was his father, who knelt before him and begged him for help—that he raised his foot, and spurned the old man over the rock—but that his father in falling, caught hold of his mantle, and dragged him after—and that they kept sinking together down, and down, and down, into bottomless gloom.—Alberic opened his eyes, and the old nurse stood by his side, wringing her hands and moaning—she had twitched him by the mantle in order to waken him up.

“Alas ! alas !” she was crying,—“wake up—our poor lady is gone dead.”

‘That’s the priest’s matter—none o’ mine ;’ uttered Alberic—and turned round again to sleep. And he did sleep, deeply and dreamlessly, till he was roused in the morning by Bertrand, who, pointing to the eastern window of the hall, showed that the sun was already risen. Alberic started up, and hastily breaking his fast, left the castle, attended by Bertrand.—

On arriving at the Rath-house, he found the doors only just being opened, and the Buerghermeister not yet come.—Waltheof was there already. Alberic entered, and muffling up his face in his cloak, stood leaning against a pillar, and anxiously watching every fresh incomer, whom either business, curiosity, or idleness brought there. In about half an hour the Buerghermeister made his appearance, in his robes of office—and took his seat : and as soon as the preliminary business of the court was arranged, Alberic stood forward and said—‘Lord Buerghermeister, I am here to make my plaint.’

“’Tis well, Lord Alberic : I shall send for the prisoner :” and he accordingly gave directions to one of the officers of the court.

In a few minutes the officer returned, followed by the Lord of Gyæn, hand-cuffed, and

his jailer. Alberic's eyes flashed again at the appearance of his victim, who was placed on the floor of the court, within a ring, partitioned off for the reception of prisoners.

"Who makes plaint against this man?" demanded the judge.

'That do I, by name Alberic,' was the answer.

"He seems a very old man, Lord Alberic," said the judge, in a tone, that rather seemed to appeal to Alberic's pity—for the honest Buerghermeister was struck by the down-cast and woe-begone look of the prisoner.

'The greater shame, my Lord, for him, that he should know no better.'

"Well—there is truth in that.—Prisoner, how is your name?"

But the prisoner made no answer, other than by raising up his streaming eyes, and pointing his shrivelled and quivering hand to Alberic.

"I do not understand your meaning:" said the Buerghermeister—"why do you not tell your name?"

'I will answer *for* him;' cried Alberic haughtily—"his name is Albert, Lord of Gyœn—and he is my father."

A simultaneous mouvement and cry of horror, ran through the whole assembly at this announcement, in which even the Buerghermeister joined: the prisoner clasped his hands

and shook his head, as though in submissive asseveration of the fact.—Alberic alone stood unmoved—the backs of his hands resting on his hips—and his eyes fixed unflinchingly on his father.

“Your father? Lord Alberic!” cried the judge after scarce a moment’s pause of wonder—

‘My father: Lord Buerghermeister:’ Alberic replied, but without moving his eyes.

“Heaven and Earth!—and do you come here to lay plaint against him for robbing you?”

‘By heaven and earth—I do.’

“Against your father!—gracious God!—and would you follow up this plaint to punishment?”

‘Aye—will I—with your kind help, my Lord; and that of the good laws you sit there to administer.’

“Know you the punishment affixed to the crime, wherewith you charge your father?”

‘Death.’

“And knowing this, you will—for the love of piety, bethink you, Lord Alberic, what you are about to do: how great a wickedness in the church of God.”

‘My Lord Judge—do we not waste time?—I am here to make plaint against that man—my father—for having robbed me of a cow—will you hear my witness?’

“Blessed mother! I have read and heard of

many shocking unnatural examples of hatred and cruelty—but never—never of anything to equal *this*.”

‘I cannot help your want of reading, my Lord; nor can I easily see how it has aught to do with the case now before you—I beseech you to let it proceed to trial.—I came here to claim a right—’

“Hard-hearted man, have you no fear?”

‘Now, by St. Peter’s keys! I begin to lose my patience. I come here, as I have just said, to claim a right—to punish a wrong doer—to do service to the weal—and the very judge, before whom I would bring my charge, not alone endeavours to dissuade me therefrom—but from the very chair of justice nicknames and threatens me.—My Lord Buerghermeister, may I proceed with my plaint?’

“Do your will, I have no power to stay you.”

But before Alberic could proceed, he was again interrupted, but from another quarter.

The court was, by this time, completely filled; for the news had spread like wildfire about the town, that in the Rath-house, there was a son arraigning his own father, for theft—and old and young of both sexes hurried thither to see so strange a spectacle. Those who could not get in, remained crowding about the doorway, and on the steps, or gathered together in knots along the street, eagerly discussing, and

of course much varying the facts of the case.— In one of these companies stood a young and handsome man, who had arrived the night before at the town, on his road to the interior of the country ; he had left the hotel, where he had slept, to stroll about the streets in search of some amusement or other, and attracted by the bustle and crowd before the Rath-house, he had turned his steps thither : a good deal interested by the accounts he heard, (for their very variety was exciting,) he endeavoured to make his way through the crowd, and get into the court ; but this he found so hopeless an attempt, that he gave it up and tried to back out again—this, however, was by no means easy, and while he was deliberating whether it were better to push forwards, or backwards, or stay where he was, and let things take their chance, something he heard from a bystander, so much re-roused his interest, which had begun a little to flag, that he resolved at every hazard to try and force his way in : and he set about this so earnestly, that the crowd, whether in respect to his great strength, which he exerted to the utmost, or to the extraordinary anxiety he manifested in his manner, made room for him as much as they could, and he gained the interior of the court. The moment he entered, and cast his eyes round him, a cry of ‘Great God!’ burst loudly from his lips, followed by an exclamation of—‘Place !

make place there for your lives !' and within the minute after his entrance, he and the prisoner were clasped in each others arms.

As soon as the confusion caused by this interruption had a little subsided, Alberic addressed the Buerghermeister thus—' I am not often in your hall of justice, my Lord, but is this the usual order of proceeding here ?'

But before the judge could answer to this taunt, the stranger turned to Alberic a face moistened, by his own tears and those of the old man's, and which flushed up with anger as he said to him—" Oh shame ! shame on thee ! shame and sorrow for this vile deed !"

' And who are you, young man ?' retorted Alberic calmly, ' that come here to disturb the process of justice—and cry *thou* and *shame* on your elders ?'

" Thou knowest me—I am this good old man's son—I am Ulric of Gyœn—and men call me the Dauntless."

' And thou knowest *me*.—*I* am this good grey-beard's son—I am Alberic—but *not* of Gyœn—and men call *me*, the Godless.'

" And godless, indeed is this act of thine. Alberic, release our father."

' May it please you, my Lord Judge, to cause this raving interloper to be removed.'

" My Lord Judge," cried Ulric, " do rather an act of justice, for it were as just as merciful—stop this shameful plaint—and free my father."

Alberic laughed out: and the judge replied, "That may not be, young man, unless the plaintiff will withdraw his plaint."

"And, Alberic, thou wilt—art thou not moved by these tears—these silver hairs?"

'Look at me.'

"Oh!—brother—brother—be it far from thee to deliver our father over to death; for shouldst thou so do, thou wouldst dishonour God, and defile our whole race."*

Alberic again laughed his horrid laugh, and then said sternly—"Carry thy cant to some other mart, hypocrite: and waste not thy breath on me—I am rock."

"Then God help me," said Ulric raising his eyes, "I have yet one resort. Farewell, my father, be of good cheer:" and so saying he kissed the old man, and, gently disengaging himself from the grasp, by which he feebly strove to detain him, hurried from the court, the people making way for him on all sides—he ran to his hotel, and saddling and mounting his horse, galloped through the streets—shouting that he rode for life and death, when the soldiers on duty were about to stop him—through the gate—and away towards the Austrian frontier.

Meanwhile the patricidal trial began—but

not till the judge had made one more unavailing, (and even insolently rejected) effort, to dissuade Alberic from his abominable purpose.

Alberic stated his complaint, Bertrand and Waltheof gave their too decisive evidence, the old lord denied nothing—answered nothing—said nothing—but only wept and cried like an infant.

The trial was concluded; and now sentence was to be pronounced. Once more the judge entreated Alberic to withdraw his complaint; the assessors and advocates of the court joined in the entreaty: Alberic heard them patiently—it even might seem with pleasure, from the smile that kept quivering about his mouth; but the pleasure might have been only that of protracting their suspense—for when the Buerghermeister at length said:—“You do not answer us, Lord Alberic—you smile, but do not answer.”—Alberic coolly answered, ‘You have had mine answer once and twice and oftener: go on with your duty, Lord Judge, and speak the doom!’

“Prisoner!” then said the Buerghermeister rising, after a short pause, “thou hast witnessed what efforts have been made to save thee from the doom of law, the which, albeit thou hast too truly deserved, yet was it to be hoped thine own son would not have called for on thee. But inasmuch as he hath done so, though obstinately and impiously he *hath*

done it, I must, however against my will and prayer, speak the doom that the law awardeth unto thee.—There is no hope for thee.—Thou must die.—Earnestly, therefore, advising thee to make thy peace with God, by sincere, though late repentance for this and thine other sins; by hearty forgiveness of all thy foes and persecutors, especially of this thy son, the bitterest and most unnatural of them, as naturally he should have been thy dearest friend and protector; and by stedfast belief in His endless mercy through his blessed Son, our Saviour; in sorrow and hope for thee—sorrow for thy sin, and hope for thy forgiveness—I break the staff of doom over thy head—and doom thee to death—that thou be carried hence through the streets of the town, and the southern gate thereof, unto the gallows that stand without the wall, and there be hanged by thy neck, until thy mortal body be dead:—and may God soon call thy soul from purgatory.”

A low murmur of sorrow came from the bystanders as soon as this judgment was uttered—this was caught up by the crowd without, but suddenly changed to a yell of horror and execration as Alberic made his appearance at the door of the court-house. He had waited within, glaring triumphantly on his victim, till the latter had been removed by the jailer and he then ordered Bertrand to fetch

their horses from the hostel, where they had been baited. He now stood at the door—alone, in an empty space—for the mob had all fled down the steps at his approach, as from a plague-infected man; there he stood, leaning on his massy two-handed sword, and sneering scornfully at the furious people—looking the very picture of a mighty embodied devil. Presently the gates of the court-yard were flung open, attracting by their harsh creaking the attention of the crowd: directly after appeared, issuing from them, the black cloth covered cart, wherein was seated the unhappy condemned, his hands folded as in prayer, and the tears no longer trickling from his upraised eyes, with a priest and the common hangman. The expression of the crowd again changed to a cry of pity, at this truly piteous sight: and they followed the cart on its sad road to the south gate. Among them rode the Buerghermeister, and others of the most weighty of the townsmen, whom either duty, or curiosity led to the spot. Presently Alberic and his attendant rode up to the procession—the crowd received them with another howl of hate (which was, however, instantly hushed, as at the same moment they came in sight of the black gallows) making way for them in terror, lest they should come in contact. They rode by the magistrates, Alberic bowing scorf-

fingly to them—they rode up alongside of the cart—and then reined in their horses.

“Oh! man of sin,” exclaimed the priest, “why comest thou now, again to disturb this unhappy being? unless indeed thou come with a wish for reconciliation and forgiveness; which even now, in the eleventh hour, may yet be granted unto thee.”

‘Mind thine own matters, babbler: it is my pleasure to ride by your side—who shall gainsay me?’

“That shall I, proud and naughty man—that do I now, and hereby, for thine outrageous wickedness, ban thee *anathema maranatha*.”

“Oh! curse him not,” interrupted his so long silent penitent—“curse him not, for he is my son—curse him not, but rather teach me to forgive him, even as our blessed Lord prayed our heavenly Father to forgive his murderers, that knew not what they did.”

“My son—my father, rather let me call thee,” answered the priest, “I am corrected by thee—let us together pray for strength from above.”

The procession soon arrived at the fatal place; the cart drew under the gallows, and stopped; the judge took his seat near the head of it; the uncovered multitude stood round, and not a sound was heard save the voices of the priest and the criminal in prayer.

The Buerghermeister motioned Alberic to

him, and said in an under tone, "This has been carried very far—all but too far to recede—yet, Lord Alberic, if better thoughts have come across you, I will even now save you from the sin you are on the brink of committing—tell me—shall I commute your wretched father's punishment of death, to perpetual solitary imprisonment—it were perhaps a greater mercy to you than to him."

'Oh! I thank you—but can you do this by law?'

"Not by the strict law—but at your bidding I will venture it."

'Then at my bidding, bide by the strict law to its strictest;' and having said this in a loud voice, he left the judge's side.

The latter then rose from his seat, and holding up his right hand, said aloud—"Hear me, oh people! I have endeavoured, as though he were mine own father, to save this man's life; I have endeavoured by almost every means to soften his accuser's hard heart; but, as ye have seen, in vain: yet *every* means I have not yet tried—for one remains: and *that* I now will try. By the right of mine office, I may at any time remove the hangman from his place, and appoint any other person to fill it, and the law, presuming that this power should not be abused, has laid no restriction on the Buerghermeister from what class of men he

should appoint such new hangman. Now I appeal to you—how doth it seem to you? for to me it seems consonant to reason, that the worst among the number of bystanders here should hang the condemned culprit.”

The mob shouted their assent to this proposition as most just and reasonable.

“He it is then,” continued the judge, pointing to Alberic, “he, who rather of the devil’s kind than man’s, hath procured the hanging of his own father.”

Another shout burst from the mob at this probably expected decision; which seemed to all a sure means of the old man’s escape;—but what was their surprise and terror, when they saw Alberic whisper his attendant, then quietly dismount from his horse, ascend the cart, and take the halter from the hangman’s hands; who, used as he was to the horrid work of death, fled in alarm from so much more callous a being than himself. Bertrand took his station at the head of the horse that drew the cart.

The people could not move—could not speak could not breathe, for very fear—they expected every moment that either the earth would open below them, or the heaven above them, in some miraculous manner, to terminate so terrible a tragedy; but no such miracle happened. The priest and his penitent had ended praying, the former retired, unconscious of the

change, that had taken place on the scaffold.—Alberic—the son—approached his father; and with his damned fingers fastened the halter round his neck.

At that moment a shout of ‘Rescue!’ rose from the further end of the mob. Alberic turned his eyes that way, and saw on the hill-side a small troop of horsemen galloping at full speed towards the town—the shout extended among the mob—the judge, between whom and the coming troop the gallows stood—bent down his head to enquire the cause of that shout—and Alberic, seeing that his father was as unconscious as the priest had been, of who stood at his side, hissed in his ear ‘*Now, father, we are quits,*’ and then directly gave a signal to Bertrand—the cart drove off, and the father remained hanging. One slight shiver and all was over—and the body slowly and imperceptibly began swinging round.

So intent were the mob on the arrival of the horsemen, that but few had perceived this revolting act—and before it was universally known among them the horsemen arrived—Ulric and a few friends—and dashed up through the yielding crowd to the foot of the gallows.

“Too late! by God!” shouted Ulric.

“Cut him down,” said one of his friends, “he may not yet be *dead*.”

The body was cut down—the magistrates not interfering—but the old man was quite

dead; the little spark of life that remained in him had been soon extinguished.

“Ruffian!” said Ulric, between his teeth, leaping on the cart, where stood Alberic with wide-opened eyes and mouth,—and seemingly insensate,—as though having done this unparalleled deed of wickedness, the fiend, that had prompted him thereto, had deserted him, and left him overwhelmed with human horror,—for he made no movement; not even to avoid the desperate sword-thrust, which Ulric plunged through his heart, that the point of the weapon came out at his back:—the father-murderer fell backward over the cart’s edge, heavily on the earth, and died without a groan or struggle.

Ulric sprang again from the cart, and kneeling by his father’s corpse kissed the livid and distorted features—then, rising, said to his friends:—

“Brethren—I thank you—fare ye well—my task is done;” and dropping the hilt of his sword on the ground, he fell on the point and died.

Bertrand had fled.

Ulric and his father were buried together—Alberic’s carcase was left where it fell, as food for dogs and ravens; *but* (to end this inhuman and horrible tale in the very words of the Chronicler) *even they, abhorring him for his malice, touched not his flesh, as though it were poison.*

LEONESSA.

LEONESSA.

CHAPTER I.

ONE lovely evening, up and down the finest street in Europe—the Strada di Toledo at Naples—just before it began to fill, sauntered Ippolito di Creta, a young Neapolitan, and noble looking ;—and yet, reader, had you lived two hundred years ago and seen him, you would have known him by his dress to have been an officer in the foreign (and therefore hated) service of that high and mighty prince, within whose dominion the sun rose and set daily—even the King of Spain and the Indies, East and West, Philippo Dominico Victori, very properly, for

brevity's sake, called Philip the Fourth. The young Neapolitan, however, though his manner seemed frank, free, and bold enough, and though his nation was said during about four centuries and a half to have averaged a rebellion about every fifteen or sixteen years,—yet young Ippolito's musings—deep though they were—were not hatching rebellion :—he was not even dreaming of “ the King's service ” at all : he was not thinking of the somewhat ungracious name of the street down which his idle step began now to grow impatient.—The critic's brow now must not relax into a smile. We would not intimate he was thinking of the Signorina Leonora, with her sweet arch smile and her sweet arch lute—nor yet of her sister the Signorina Caterina, sweeping with a silver hand her golden harp as they had glided in their mother's felucca, on the preceding evening, over the moonlight ripples of the Bay of Naples, then quite as beautiful as now no doubt : —and yet it was in Ippolito's hearing those sirens of that siren coast had that night played and sung. How odd he was not thinking of them—of one at least of them.—To break this prolix spell—the longest ever said or sung,—he was thinking of his *friend* : (can the reader sympathise with him ?) an absent friend — Onorio Romano : Roman by name, a Florentine by mere birth, but a Neapolitan noble, by

family, by inheritance, and in heart and soul. So was his father : a baron of the kingdom of Naples, who had long ago immured himself in his castle among the Abruzzi mountains—far from the city of his land, and the vice-regal seat of its deputed Spanish lords. But it was not thus Ippolito was now thinking of Onorio. The contrast between their politics never occurred to him, in spite of the Austro-Spanish feather that kept dangling over his eyes,—the snip-snap pinked slashed puffed Spanish sleeves that encumbered his folded arms,—and the Spanish sword that, even in undress, hung by his side, and kept clattering, and braying against the pavement “remember you wear our uniform.” Ippolito thinking but about his friend, mused sadly but about his absent friend’s long silence. And now he was getting wonderously impatient about something. Just in this juncture—from towards the end of the street, by the Mercato, appeared his servant Pietro Agnello—or Tuscanly speaking, Angelo—just in the nick of time, like the everlasting *Angelos*, or messenger, of a Greek drama. Ippolito looking down the long strada saw him shifting something from hand to hand—looking at it—looking it through and through—weighing it first on one palm then on the other—and all this with the coolest idling step, and lounge from side to side, of the veriest of lazy Lazaroni.

“A mal’aria in thy throat,” muttered Ippolito!—“well—a letter at last however!”—and he hurried to meet the man. Pietro looking up, suddenly pocketed whatever it was he was handling:—and met his master with a profound bow. “Body of Bacchus!” said Ippolito, “why did ye not *come* thus headformost?”

‘They tell me it induces vertigo, your Signoria,’ answered Pietro.

“How dared ye do other than *run*, in *my* presence, knave?”

‘Your Signoria, I was afraid of running against some one in the strada—’

“Why, rascal, there was not a soul here but myself”—

‘Your Signoria is the very one I meant,’ said Pietro.

“Quiet!” said Ippolito, “give me the letter.”

‘That’s very true,’ said the messenger, ‘there *is* one—but how your Signoria came to know it’—

“Why thou brazen-faced varlet, did I not see thee twisting and turning it as though thou wouldst read it?”

‘And *could* I?’ said Pietro—‘if I.’

“Hey-day,” said his master, twisting and turning the packet himself as if *he* too knew not what to make of it, then interrupted himself and his servant at once by boxing his ears—those of the latter that is.—

‘Your Signoria have mercy o’ me, when was ever the letter in my hands? to be sure.....’

“A woman’s hand undoubtedly,” murmured his master—

‘I thought so myself,’ said Pietro, then suddenly looking over his master’s shoulder added—‘So it is—may I be hanged.....’

“Amen!” said Ippolito, laughing and cuffing him again with an odd feeling about his heart which he could not understand, as he proceeded to open the billet. Withinside was written in the same fair handwriting of the same doubtless fair hand—“Read this in a mirror.” And then followed what seemed to be a long letter, though not a letter was legible:—a never-ending series of the most rigmarole scrawling that ever was meant to be read.—“Anything for the sake of a *secret*!”—soliloquized Ippolito with something between peevishness and self complacence.—“A plague o’ thy sweet and most feminine fist. And a plague of thine affectation!—crossed too, and crossed again—no—not a word readable. Ten to one now I shall condescend within three days to unravel thy mystery.—Hey, rascal Pietro, whom art staring at?”

‘I am always looking to your Signoria,’ answered Pietro—and added, as his master was about to cuff him after the fashion of the times, —‘And mostly for *that*, as for every thing.’

His master held his hand—“Run then, knave, directly—I’m sure there’s another letter

come—see the courier thyself—make haste—fly.”

‘With the speed of a Spaniard,’ said Pietro. His master smiled—and turned round to catch more of the sunset light on the letter.

“To the deuce with her trash,” said he about to put it up in his pocket, then opened it again, saying—“But I will be gallant enough to tear off her warning for fear of accidents.” And he tore off from the head of the sheet the words—“Read this in a mirror:”—and strode away homewards.

Pietro had checked his step again—picked up the slip of paper—perused it with his eyes,—then winked at his departing master knowingly with one of them. And he too passed away,—but down the street, towards the Mercato again.—But the company were now thronging upon the Strada di Toledo,—and Ippolito was delayed as he hurried home, by many a meeting, as little pleasant to him to abide, as it would be amusing to us to record.

CHAPTER II.

The mysterious letter was as follows :—

‘ This comes to you, dear friend Ippolito,
‘ from your true friend Onorio; in spite of the
‘ lie which my writing must have told you, ere
‘ it is read. O Signor Pylades, my firm and
‘ faithful, — my right arm is rapidly getting
‘ better of a bad accident it has received;
‘ therefore, since I can delay no longer, I am
‘ forced to write with my left, rather than post-
‘ pone my recovery and our meeting, Ippolito.
‘ How I shall succeed in my sinister purpose
‘ the sweet saints above may know: this is
‘ my first attempt; and it is bad enough so
‘ far. — “ Bad enough indeed, poor fellow!”
muttered Ippolito, “ what the deuce can it all
“ mean?” and slowly and with great labour he

continued to decipher the almost illegible scrawl:—‘And now pray let our meeting be
‘soon,—for I have a world of news for your
‘hearing. If you did but know... but how
‘should you, if I will not tell you? I will write
‘you all mine adventures then, and begin at the
‘beginning. You must know your best friend
‘verily believes himself in love,—Oh! stay,—
‘this is not the beginning—though Onorio is
‘pretty sure it will be the end. I shall be long
‘in writing you all that I have to say, and it
‘will needs be so, as you will find when you
‘come to hear it. You can turn to my last, if
‘you have not already burnt it, for the date of
‘my arrival at Rieti; but if you have, I have
‘no means of helping you to that important
‘piece of information. Sure I am, it was some
‘very long while ago: for the events of a whole
‘life seem to have past since then,—and I for-
‘get completely the man I was before. It will
‘astonish you then to learn I have not got
‘more than fifteen miles beyond, —I mean
‘beyond Rieti.’ (These four words were inserted
in Onorio’s letter afterwards. “He must have
thought me very stupid,” mumbled Ippolito.)
‘Well now, Ippolito, attend. And let not your
‘brains meanwhile go a wool-gathering after Sig-
‘norina Caterina, nor Signora Leonora, nor any
‘such sweet rhymes so pastoral and Della Crus-
‘can. Oh that the Abbate Tityro, or the Abbate
‘Corydone had been roaming now with me,
‘crook in hand, over the Abruzzi. How it

‘ would have astonished their shepherdships !
‘ Tuscan as I am, what heresy am I writing ! and
‘ that to a mere Neapolitan. I beg your pardon,
‘ *Don Ippolito*. Forgive me : I am cupid-
‘ stricken, and my heart is light. So is my head,
‘ you’ll say. I shall never get to my story un-
‘ less I dash “ *in medias res*,” like a true knight
‘ in a charge of cavalry. So—Ippolito, I was
‘ on horseback. You recollect my winged
‘ steed Frontino, (heaven rest thy gay spirit,
‘ Ariosto, whom I stole the steed’s name from)—
‘ I was riding along a way, where a horse *could*
‘ go, which has not been the case through *all*
‘ my journey since I left you ;—and I had made
‘ up my mind to forswear Frontino for good—
‘ that is,—a good while—at Acqua Soave, where
‘ the mountain land begins in earnest. The
‘ siesta was long past,—but its silence still
‘ lasted ; when the thunder of a cataract burst
‘ on my ears—(it *should* have been stronger on
‘ my *right* ear, but I do not remember it was
‘ so.) You know this is a music I cannot
‘ withstand, although you military men prefer
‘ a braying trumpet, or a lady’s lute ;—(which
‘ lady, Ippolito ? is that settled yet ? My letter
‘ must not be all selfish.) Well, I struck off
‘ to the right, over some wildish good strong
‘ moorland ; the noise grew stronger, — too
‘ strong for Frontino. I tied him to a tree-
‘ branch : and went on at something more
‘ than a walk in my impatience, still rising
‘ slightly, when suddenly, as among *some*

‘ broken pasture ground I came upon a little
‘ mound about half man’s height, a ridge of
‘ fantastic crags, and distorted old trees burst
‘ upon my sight beyond the line of moor which
‘ hitherto had been my horizon. Two more
‘ cautious steps, and I stood on the overhang-
‘ ing brink of the most magnificent ravine I
‘ ever witnessed. Below me on one side
‘ gushed from a black cavern as it were the
‘ half arch of a waterfall looking solid as arctic
‘ ice and living as a sunbeam :—its spray dashed
‘ up from the bottom in a similar curve almost
‘ as high, almost as distinct, and dissolved in
‘ perpetual showers beyond, while a lake in the
‘ opening of the valley, seeming, from the dis-
‘ tance of the height I was on, little as a single
‘ bright breastplate on a field of battle—showed
‘ whither the waters stole away hidden in their
‘ deep and wooded channel. Below my feet
‘ on the other side hung a man, seated on the
‘ two or three sapling stems of a bush, which
‘ grew from a projecting crag ; his left arm was
‘ twined round a curling root, that came out of
‘ the face of the rock and then grew in again.—
‘ With this hand he held a folio, and would you
‘ believe it, he was sketching! From my place
‘ I could watch all his work, and, though it made
‘ my head ache, I did so, and could see with
‘ his eyes the scene from that point, tenfold
‘ more astounding than that presented to mine
‘ own.—I could tear this letter that has at-
‘ tempted description. If that man lives, and

‘ the eyes of the knowing ones are framed by
‘ the same hand as Onorio’s—you will one day
‘ see that scene, on the canvass of the mightiest
‘ master of our age:—now—he is a penniless
‘ boy.—But I forestall my story. I longed to
‘ accost the stranger. He was but little way
‘ below me. But the roar of the waters was
‘ above my voice. And my brain ran round
‘ to see his situation. I trembled lest I should
‘ startle and slay him by an indiscretion. Be-
‘ sides, I began to fear for poor Frontino. I
‘ hastened back. The horse was plainly fear-
‘ ful. He had plainly been struggling too. I
‘ resolved to gallop him to Acqua Soave, and
‘ return on foot, and find this stranger. I
‘ leapt on Frontino’s back, but ere I could
‘ wind him round to the road, he was off like a
‘ dart over the moor in a circuitous direction
‘ rightward of that I had taken a-foot. How
‘ could I tell if he were pelting away to fling
‘ himself over the very same ravine. His
‘ speed was mad. His sense gone ; or he felt
‘ his strength superior at last to man’s. The
‘ poor brute ! you know how fond he was of
‘ me ; how I loved him like a boy almost ; how
‘ we have often laughed together to see him
‘ run round and round the little paddock open-
‘ mouthed after the girl Nannetta, when we sent
‘ her out with the halter and sieve, not to catch
‘ him so much as that we might see her scamper
‘ away, frightened at his gambols. Well, poor
‘ Frontino ! I wonder if. Where did I leave

‘ my story? Caresses, effort, and stratagem,
‘ were alike vain. My horse was making for
‘ the ravine,—straight for it,—though not the
‘ shortest way. Nothing now would turn him.
‘ There was one hope. A massy wall of rock
‘ skirted the moor above the fall. If he took
‘ the moor side of that rampier—or could be
‘ brought to do so—well!—if not;—you shall
‘ hear. The other way, if way it could be
‘ called, within the wall towards the ravine,—
‘ was turf at first, then gradually bare rock;—
‘ running first towards the ravine on the right,
‘ then gradually growing flat, then shelving to-
‘ wards the cataract;—wide at first, then gra-
‘ dually narrowing till at a jutting curve of the
‘ rock outwards, it seemed to end almost in
‘ nothing,—at any rate, not in a passage for
‘ either horse or man. The horse took this
‘ course, the wrong one, as if he was a rational
‘ suicide. He had long ceased all obedience to
‘ the reins, which I had been pulling, till my
‘ arms ached as though their nerves would
‘ crack :—I now suddenly bethought me to let
‘ go the right one, and with both hands tugged
‘ at the left, in order, if possible to turn the
‘ beast in time; but he tossed and shook his
‘ head wildly,—the leather snapped close to the
‘ bit; and he sped his own mad way.... Oh
‘ my God! I remembered thee, Ippolito, and
‘ thy love for me,—my father and his love for
‘ thee and hate of thy masters; their reciprocal

‘ suspicious hate of him, his country’s friend. . .
‘ that politics should have come across me at
‘ such a moment! Oh mine own trampled
‘ country, this came of thy scars, yea, wounds!
‘ —Well, dearest friend, forgive me; all this
‘ came across me as rapidly as the cold wind
‘ of death that smote my hot brow rushing up
‘ from the ravine,—that now terrible depth;
‘ and with these came also a dread of death—a
‘ coward dread,—mingling too with strange
‘ sorrow, for what I felt must be the terrible
‘ end of the gallant brute I rode—and for a
‘ moment that sorrow was all-absorbing.—On
‘ he sped for a moment—the horrible gulf met
‘ mine eye; all that complex remembrance had
‘ made me a coward,—the instinct of life made
‘ me snatch a stiletto from my girdle. Frontino
‘ had seen it—the gulf—he staggered,—there
‘ was no retreat, as he staggered, he went on;
‘ I stabbed him into the neck and sprang up.
‘ The poor fellow rolled over the steep:—while
‘ I hung on a bough that I had grappled hold
‘ of in springing from the saddle. I felt that
‘ arm was unequal to my weight,—indeed the
‘ shock had put it out of place. Instead of
‘ dropping directly on the ledge of rock, I re-
‘ lieved that arm with the other: and hung like
‘ a coward there. What a fool! But I could
‘ not help it. The whole enormous space to
‘ the cataract’s foot was laid uninterrupted un-
‘ der my starting gaze. And if I dropped that

‘ little space down to the shelving ledge,—one
‘ unsteady foot would slip me to my grave
‘ after Frontino. ‘ Would I had died with him,’
‘ thought I, and cursed my presence of mind
‘ in stabbing him, as cowardice. To my eye,
‘ as I looked down, my feet seemed almost
‘ to touch the ledge. My body felt as if length-
‘ ening. I should be tiptoe on the ledge in a
‘ minute. And yet I dared not drop—I was
‘ sure it was delusion—it must be further off,
‘ —I was sure I should stagger, or slip,—and
‘ then must be hurled headlong. I shook like
‘ a child,—my feet grated against the face of the
‘ perpendicular rock whence grew the tree
‘ I hung on:—they made themselves resting-
‘ places on the roots of tufts of little weeds: I
‘ felt myself alone in a horrible world, tiptoe on
‘ a blade of grass, and the grave yawning under-
‘ neath which three minutes before I would
‘ have faced gladly, give me but a cause; and
‘ now I felt the coward shudder in every vein;
‘ felt it grow worse and worse; had I but had
‘ a voice then I could have shrieked like a
‘ woman. Another’s voice aroused me, else I
‘ should have died, perhaps before I must have
‘ dropped perforce from weariness and pain.’
“ Spring on me—forward Signor:” it said.—I’ll
“ catch you.” It was a man upon the platform
‘ whence Frontino had fallen. The sight of my
‘ kind gave me man’s nerve again. I did as I
‘ was bid.—I fell into his young and powerful

‘ arms (he is only eighteen—it was the painter);
‘ they caught me tight, but my weight was too
‘ great, and had he not voluntarily thrown him-
‘ self backward with a bias towards his left, we
‘ must have been over the cliff, both together.
‘ As it was, my dangling dislocated arm ma-
‘ naged awkwardly, as I clung round his neck,
‘ to touch upon and start from the ground with
‘ both our weights forcibly thrown on it. Still
‘ I bore up.—He drew me a little further—
‘ saying, “I saw your horse roll over, Signor.”
‘ ‘Signor,’ said I,—‘noble young man’—and then
‘ fainted. That was the first moment I
‘ had recognized him as the cataract painter.
‘ I believed he soon recovered me. How—I
‘ do not know,—but possibly by plucking up
‘ my finger nails, which he afterwards in very
‘ high spirits assured me, was much the best
‘ mode to adopt with gentlemen who fainted.
‘ He offered to guide me down to Leonessa by
‘ the best of the bad paths that led to it; at
‘ least the best he knew. He often gave me
‘ assistance, which alone got me over my diffi-
‘ culties. He always supported me in walking
‘ where I could be supported:—and when I
‘ declined to trouble him in that—professed
‘ that to walk with a Signor was an honour
‘ he could not forego.—Most of all, one of
‘ Naples (for I had mentioned myself to be
‘ of thence)—“If,” said he, “you be true
‘ Naples, Signor.”—I had spoken admiringly

‘ of his drawing:—we were forced to rest now
‘ and then—that is *I was forced*, (for thinking
‘ painters were sons of luxury because the
‘ highest luxury is their mother, painting,—I
‘ was startled to see how like a mountain-hun-
‘ ter this young fellow moved and made pro-
‘ gress, and would have now,—but for my being
‘ with him) :—at these times I enjoyed his mag-
‘ nificent sketches—done, observe, merely on
‘ primed paper—he was so poor;—yet he told
‘ me he was “richer than any in Naples—for
‘ “I serve an *Italian* Sovereign—Painting. And
‘ freedom is riches, Signor.” He told me I
‘ should enjoy his drawings, he saw, if I were
‘ not in pain. “But now,” he added, “you
‘ *flatter* me: and, if I *see* it, what good will
‘ it do me.” Once, in our descent, I was
‘ forced to exert my left arm a very little. The
‘ pain was so excessive I thought I must have
‘ fainted again.—“Beware!” said he, and as he
‘ made a gesticulation of that sickening process
‘ dragging up the finger nails, his countenance
‘ assumed the most eccentric look of farce that
‘ ever a most beautiful face exhibited.—‘ I
‘ “must—in spite of you—Salvatoriello,” said I
‘ “laughing, ‘ since that is your name. On my
‘ “honour, with your genius I would change it
‘ “for Salvatore.”—“That is my *christian* name,”
‘ said he, with an earnestness and solemnity of
‘ look that surprised me. “My father gave me
‘ “that name—but my playmates gave me this.

“Time enough yet ere I *myself* reject it.”—He
 ‘turned on his heel proudly away as I sat on
 ‘a bank of moss: and began a burst of play-
 ‘ful poetry at the highest pitch of his fine
 ‘voice. I would give worlds to be able to
 ‘write you the words—but it was too good to
 ‘be written.—“Are you rested?”—he asked,
 ‘I answered ‘Quite so.’—“Well then, Sig-
 ‘nor, sit still! for the rest of the road is too
 ‘bad for your arm. I will join you very soon.
 ‘“*There* is amusement for an Emperor.” He
 ‘flung me down his folio, saying, “If I take it
 ‘with me, I shall forget you, Signor, and get
 ‘sketching again.”—And away he darted over
 ‘a gulf to a cloven crag—and down with long
 ‘strides evidently by a shorter cut, the trees
 ‘swinging back as with a mighty storm when
 ‘released from the instantaneous clutch of his
 ‘hand. His folio *was* full of amusement—
 ‘wonderful draughts, not only of landscape,—
 ‘but satire and history—and scraps of poetry,
 ‘most wild and electrical.—Some were far too
 ‘exciting, arousing; they exhausted my spirits
 ‘too quickly.—I longed for his return. Poem
 ‘and painting adapt our souls to them awhile,
 ‘but they cannot adapt themselves to *us*, as
 ‘living man can.’

“Why it is he poor Onorio is in love with:”
 thought Ippolito, “well, he does seem a fine
 “fellow—if, brother, thou colour not highly.

“At any rate he has been Onorio’s saviour, this Salvatoriello. But I thought to have found a lady in the case by now. A complete take-in as ever I experienced. Well—now for the last cross of this long-paged letter.”

‘At last he came, Ippolito’—it went on—‘clambering up the rocks: and told me they were bringing a litter for me. The exertion and heat and pain I had undergone had been succeeded by drowsiness, chilliness and apathy. ‘My Salvatore,’ said I, ‘Christ bless thee. I feel myself sinking. The arm is a trifle—but, altogether I may find this too much. One word with thee: are they come up? Take this purse—and, *if* I live, give me half the needful trash in it back again to carry me home. I am a noble, and it will be of no further consequence, betwixt *us*, my deliverer.’ I was so faint, what with one thing and another, I scarce knew where I was, as he helped to lift me up on the litter—but I had just perception enough, as he did so, to feel the purse drop again into my pocket. I instinctively put my hand thither. But he put on such a burlesque expression of offended dignity—then laughing himself—that I was forced into a smile. He would have been a glorious comedian. He came and held up the head of my litter. Its swaying motion first made me dizzy—then drowsy.

‘ I believe I slept short sleeps broken by pangs
‘ and starts of pain at the roughnesses of our
‘ journey which my kind and careful bearers
‘ could not avoid. Otherwise I was uncon-
‘ scious of my journey. Nor was I conscious
‘ of any change of place. I was conscious only of
‘ a change of sensations, a change from motion
‘ to rest. A difference of voices and faces round
‘ me. Two beings, like angels without wings,
‘ standing with their arms round one another’s
‘ necks and looking down on me: sometimes
‘ speaking to me; sometimes singing very
‘ soothingly. The fact is I lay at this place—
‘ Leonessa—for some time very ill. They say
‘ I was sometimes out of my senses—talked a
‘ good deal of treason—a man must be out of
‘ his senses to do that you know—besides some
‘ other nonsense of another cast;—but wait—
‘ let me finish my play ere I begin my epilogue.
‘ Salvatoriello meanwhile had made this his
‘ head-quarters—being here every evening, and
‘ very attentive to me when here. One day,
‘ since I am getting better, I said to him,
‘ ‘ Salvatoriello, I should always be your debtor;
‘ ‘ but you are not so ungenerous as to wish to
‘ ‘ make me seem so? Though noble, I am still
‘ ‘ a son of Naples, and therefore a brother of
‘ ‘ yours, Salvatoriello mine;—nor, though an
‘ ‘ unbridled horse, good faith, was near making
‘ ‘ an end of me, do I love the unbridled horse of
‘ ‘ Naples one whit worse than you do? Now

“ why, having made me your friend, should
“ you not treat me so? and just borrow one
“ half of my purse? you will pay me again when
“ you’re a grand signor, which I know you will
“ one day be.” “ I will, if I live,” answered the
“ young painter, “ but listen to reason, signor.
“ My round will be the Abruzzi mountain land.
“ Not a soul can I meet there but thieves—
“ and patriots. Both parties therefore will
“ agree that superfluous money were the worst
“ item I could add to my travelling equipage.
“ Poor as I am, signor, I could pay you
“ your money’s worth as soon as I get home
“ —if I live and have luck—for you are no
“ Hebrew of the Strada di Carità—though
“ you know what is what thrice as well.” “ That
“ is what I would bring you to,” said I. “ But
“ I would not propose it, because you’re so
“ proud.” “ I am a painter, signor,” said
“ young Rosa, for that is his surname; and he
“ flushed up to the eyes with the crimson of a
“ rose of Pœstum: then shrugging his shoul-
“ ders added—“ and if that be to be proud,
“ God ha’ mercy on us!” “ You will then,
“ Rosa?” said I. “ Signor,” he answered, with
“ an affected good humour—but tears stood in
“ his eyes at my perseverance—“ Signor, how
“ can I grow a great man, if ye will have me
“ murdered by banditti.” “ I had gone too far,
“ but not too far to know him. Forgive me
“ what next I did, Ippolito; our ring—the ring

‘thou gavest me, I plucked from my finger
‘and said—‘Look here, my Salvatore—tell me
‘what this is worth.’ “I cannot, signor,” was
‘his answer—“I know nothing of jewels. I
‘am a poor painter. As a work of *art* it is
‘beautiful indeed.” ‘But is it not crowded
‘for so small a gem,’ I asked. “No, signor,
‘there are fourteen figures, I could not count
‘them if they were crowded. It is too well
‘grouped for that.” ‘Can you make out the
‘figure on the exergue, my painter?’ “A fish-
‘erman,” he readily answered. ‘And I told
‘him—‘Marino dei Pesci engraved the seal.
‘Michel Angiolo Buonorotti wore it daily on
‘his finger for his friend’s sake till his dying
‘day.’ “Michel Angiolo,” cried Salvatoriello,
‘oh! what a treasure, signor!’ “It belongs
‘to you, my painter. To no other soul on
‘earth would I part with it.’ “Do *you* so
‘idolize Michel Angiolo too!” asked Rosa. I
‘confess his question took me by surprise,
‘and I felt his full blue eye looking through
‘me, darting fire from its darkness. “Sig-
‘nor—no”—he went on—this ring was a *gift*
‘to you. I will not take away a pledge of—
‘of—friendship.” ‘My Rosa, you mistake
‘me,’ said I—faintly—hesitatingly taking ad-
‘vantage of *his* hesitation. “Yes, signor, but
‘not altogether”—rejoined the youth. “It
‘*was* a gift to you.—It were unlucky with
‘*me*, — I should lose it — among the ban-

“ ditti, most likely.” He put it on my finger
‘ which I held out—not after all ill pleased.
‘ (I say this to *flatter* you.) And he added
‘ —“ I *will* seek you out, if I can, count;
“ on my *return* from the Abruzzi. Then will
‘ be our time for giving and taking.”—This was
‘ the last evening I saw him, Ippolito. Before
‘ daybreak the young painter was gone. Mean-
‘ while I had been making other new acquaint-
‘ ance. For now—in this little space I must
‘ tell you my kind host has two lovely daughters.
‘ Leonessa, the eldest, the namesake of her
‘ birthplace, has bright black hair and flashing
‘ eyes—free as a lion’s and modest as a lamb’s
‘ (I doubt my natural history is at fault, but
‘ you’ll see what I mean.) As for Pargoletta,
‘ the younger, she is quite a little Dryad,—so
‘ nymphlike! such a fairy! such a sylph! such
‘ a fawn! such a—anything else that poets
‘ have, or shall ever fancy, of beautiful and trip-
‘ ping. Do pray steal half a month, and come
‘ and see us here—and drag me away; for no-
‘ thing else can.—I was long in doubt which to
‘ fall in love with—but I am now pretty sure it
‘ *shall* be.

“ Well !” exclaimed Ippolito — “ Why con-
“ found me for a coxcombical vanity—an em-
“ bodied foppery—I verily believe. . . . why, yes,
“ I *have* gone and torn off this girl’s name with
“ my incognita’s warning—A plague of the
“ mirror—nay, I’ll not break it—here’s a little

“ bit more reading—It may help me to guess
“ which he’s in love with.”

Whether Ippolito found it so—let us try and
find out:—it went on. . . .

. ‘ take this Salvatoriello !—he has left
‘ me no more room.

‘ Your donship’s true friend,

‘ ONORIO.’

“ ‘ M ! ’—ruminated Ippolito—“ I have cou-
“ pled but an ungracious omen with her name
“ —if that word before *take* were the word
“ that I guess.—Halloo, rascal Pietro, where
“ hast thou been loitering ? Run to the
“ Strada.”

‘ Yes, Signor,’ said Pietro, who that moment
‘ came in—

“ Yes, you know when I left you, Pietro—
“ run and fetch the slip of paper I tore off of
“ this, and threw on the pavement—”

‘ The saints bless your Signoria !’ said Pietro
—‘ why, I’ve eat it.’

“ Eat it !” cried his master—

‘ Oh mercy, signor !—I thought it might be
‘ a secret—so I eat it—to keep it’—

“ Eat it, fool !” again cried the master—

‘ Yes, indeed—signor—but I never meant to
‘ do such a thing.’

Reader, we had better leave Pietro Agnello,

for he is most assuredly about to get a drubbing.—If we skip over a couple of years, he will most probably have got over it. And as these two chapters are only meant for what the lawyers call “matter of inducement,”—you, it is hoped, may have found matter of inducement to read on further.

CHAPTER III.

REMEMBER, readers, the space betwixt the last chapter and this must stand for two years. And now, if among you all, there be any here—any “dear friend of Cæsar’s”—that is, Wellington’s—who was with him in Spain, and recollects what a Spanish mountain inn was—let him bring his remembrance hither, which, with a little of his fancy, will save both of us the description of a little inn in the Abruzzi mountains, wherein we shall now find our friend Ippolito seated by a window, while that very general friend, a bottle, is standing by his side. It seems he was there to give the meeting—a friendly one—to Onorio,—who from

his paternal castle was now making a second tour in the mountainland of the "Abruzzo beyond the river Pescara." The purpose of that tour may be imagined—or its explanation must be waited for. The appointment with his friend should not seem to be well kept, to judge from the following exclamation which escapes Ippolito—"Nây, by my faith! this is "*too* tiresome!"—"both friend and servant," he continued mentally, 'to keep me waiting 'thus!'—And Ippolito as he again settled himself on the old oaken settle—and, leaning forward with his arms crossed on the table, looked doggedly down the neck of the empty bottle before him—Ippolito in this attitude, (so far from the gesture being anyways suited to the thought,) was deriving a secret solid consolation, from the remembrance that he could horsewhip Pietro Agnello enough to serve for the sins of him and Onorio too. The empty bottle however suggested more disconsolate recollections, that he must be back before sunset at Rieti—and that in sober sadness it was certainly now past mid-day. And he began internally reproaching Onorio with dilatoriness, unfriendliness, nay unkindness,—and twenty other such peccadilloes—which means "heinous sins." To all which Onorio returned no answer: which showed he took his reproaches in good part, according to that general sweetness of temper, which distinguished Ippolito's friend

in at least one person's estimation. Still the impatient Ippolito—in spite of his long-suffering friend's silence—kept up this same taciturn conversation in the same hateful strain—dealing out all manner of complaints, petty oaths, railings, and reminiscences of having been played the same trick over and over again. Still he got no answer from Onorio, no more than if he were not speaking to Onorio—which an inattentive observer might have supposed was the case, for his lips did not even move. Chancing however at last to cast an eye up at the casement,—it seemed as if he had got an answer, for he rejoined aloud, “Well! it *is* a beautiful place I must own.” And this generous assent to the inaudible observation of his invisible colloquist seemed to have the odd effect of restoring the young man to the recollection that he was talking to nobody—namely himself—for in English both phrases mean the same I believe—which says much for our modesty—or else our censoriousness. For Ippolito di Creta breaking off abruptly a dialogue so truly *spirituelle* (he probably felt tired of sustaining both characters) began to think to himself—‘Never mind, I shall have had a very pleasant trip for nothing:—and to be sure, I could not well have had it at a cheaper rate.’—Young men may draw an appropriate moral from this last rumination when they are told that Ippolito was reckoning without his host, not having yet

called for one with him,—that he had been at this dog-kennel of a house some days,—that he was dressed in the Spanish Austrian uniform, though on the borders of the Abruzzi,—and that, though a gentlemanly mannered man according to the fashion of the times, he had nevertheless the full swing—not to say swagger—of a cavalry man of those times;—and all these things would tell up just then, more than one might be aware of, in the bill of the adroit, shrewd, sharp witted landlord of an Albergo in the Abruzzo Ultra. Ippolito, however charmed with the lovely mountain scenery, could not remain long uninterrupted in the above state of returning complacency. He started up, and threw open the lattice. It could not be that it excluded the sweet air of the hill country,—for it was not a glazed casement:—nor that it impeded the prospect—for it was very considerably broken away;—but it did not fasten well, and was loose,—and kept alternately flapping to and a-jar every moment. It is likely the mournful creaking of its rusty hinges offended his Campanian nerves. This nuisance once removed—his powerful philosophy restored him the good humour it had broken into,—and he again gazed forth far away into the avenues of the southern mountains with a renewed avidity of pleasure and determination to be delighted: and in this spirit he repeated—“Yes—a *lovely* place:” and his

thoughts added—‘ And I could half fancy
 ‘ myself content to dream away life here,—in
 ‘ happy—happy indolence,—yes, wondrous
 ‘ happy.’

“ Aye, Fancy with her drowsy spell. . . . ”

he began singing to himself—then, thinking probably that singing to one’s self was not so improving—he put the bottle up in the window and seating himself upon the table, said, “ Come
 “ mine empty flaggon, I must e’en sing to thee
 “ what wilt have now ? old boy.”—But without waiting for an answer, the too impatient Ippolito began singing his own song—a fashionable
 “ little song after the Naples fashion”—and in which, like many little songs after the reigning fashion, the expression of the poetry was “ at high words” with that of the melody.—This must be taken for granted—it cannot well be proved without giving the music of.

“ Aye, Fancy with her drowsy spell,
 Can even lull a soldier’s soul ;
 And for awhile the high thoughts quell,
 That spurred him on to honour’s goal.
 So that, unmanned, he sees no pleasure,
 Save in the lap of idle leisure.

But then, if on his ear should fall
 The trumpet-tones of duty’s voice,
 He bounds.

“Oh Caterina?” interrupted—not his auditor, the bottle—but himself the singer; although who this often mentioned Caterina, the singing Signorina, was—doth nowhere appear on record in the biography of Ippolito di Creta.—Such is the tasteless partiality of time, when he has grown old and drivelled, through a couple more centuries. Ippolito’s singing minute was over—and he started from the table to go look for Pietro Agnello. But Pietro Agnello, like another more important personage, was at his elbow as soon as thought of: for he came scrambling up at the casement, and before he could pop his head in, had cried ‘Where the devil has my master run away with his song, I....?’ The “wonder” which was to follow, was frozen in the utterance—as his master snatched up his riding rod—and Pietro Agnello, hung horror-stricken, like a fascinated dove in a tree before a glaring basilisk.—

“You dog, you—you loitering cur,”—roared Ippolito—“what have you been wasting your “time about?”

‘I was listening to your Signora’s singing—indeed I was under the casement.’—

“Drag your long carcase in, Sirrah, do;—“hanging there!—a gibbet’s your place to hang “on:—you rogue.”

‘Then I shan’t choose my own, your Signoria,’—rejoined Pietro, slinking in.

“And now”—said the master—“account for

“yourself, monkey, or—you know what to expect”—

‘My expectations—Signor, you’re very kind—are very small, Signor,—my expectations I mean,—and if. . . .’

“Well! what news?” broke in Ippolito—

‘Bad, Signor, bad,’ said Pietro with a shake of the head.—

“Hey! *what* news, I say?” said Ippolito in a much altered tone.

‘Oh—a deal, Signor. First and foremost, they say, that that horrible cut-throat outlaw, Gonzelli, is about to make a——’

“Pooh—ooh—ooh!” drawled Ippolito in his throat—

‘No,—a sally, Signor.’—

“Who’s Gonzelli?—at least. . . .hold your tongue,” said Ippolito—“don’t answer—I asked you——”

‘The news, signor,—so I thought I *should* answer;—I *thought* you asked the news, signor, and that’s——’

“Not the news I wanted,”—said the master: and the man replied that that was ‘the new news, but perhaps, his Signoria had not heard the old news, about the hundreds of monks that had leagued with the banditti—and how it was thought his Holiness Urban the Eighth, was about to make them a corporate body by a bull, and draw up a rule for them with his own hand, so that they might be employed against

the abolished order of Jesuitesses, who were busy getting up a heresy—to be headed by cardinals—and, instead of a papa, a mamma, who was always to be named mamma Joan, the first—second—third—and so on.’

Hereupon Ippolito twirled the man round, and putting his foot behind him, sent him flat up against the wall on the other side of the room, with his face to it; then taking him by the collar, and putting his sword’s point to the back of his naked neck—asked for “the letters.”

The terrified and timid Pietro Agnello shook in his shoes, like a sheep in warm weather, and turning his head round, assured his signoria, that there were no such letters at any of those places—but he ‘had quite forgot,’ he ‘was sure.’—

“Forgot the letters!” thundered Ippolito.—

‘Oh no—forgot to tell your Signoria,’—cried Pietro. And his master let him fall backwards on the floor—which permission he absolutely took advantage of.—Ippolito, regardless of his follower’s fall, was pacing up and down the room, in a fit of undecided musing.

“Well,” said he, “this is strange—most strange of Onorio; neither to come nor send. “——Pietro!”—and the following rapid bit of dialogue ensued:—

‘Signor!’

“Saddle our horses! directly!”

‘Horses, Signor.’—

“Yes, I said so.”

‘But your Signoria has not heard....’

“Anything of the Count Romano?” cried Ippolito.—

‘Oh diamine! no, Signor,—only of a little old market woman that told me....’

“To the deuce with thy little old woman and self!—saddle and bridle—in a moment—thou bit of an ass!—impertinent knave—intolerable fool!....

‘A knave at your Signoria’s service, of course.’ answered Pietro—‘but no fool—’ he added going towards the door, while his master resolved not to be vexed, began to sing his old ‘fancy with her drowsy spell,’—as if with an inward dogged determination, that he would sing it through ere he left the Albergo.—If so, however, he was again mistaken,—being interrupted by Pietro’s sudden ‘Hallo!’ as he ran against some one in turning sharp round from the door:—it was answered by a cheery ‘hallo! fellow!’ and Onorio entered pushing him by—and addressed his musical friend in a recitative intonation with,—

For all at court are practising and squalling

Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, the rising man

La, sol, fa, mi, re, do, the man that’s falling—

“Onorio!” cried Ippolito—“you’re a mighty pretty fellow,” as they embraced—

‘What! and that was Pietro—eh? my old friend,’—said Onorio—‘why who, was to know thee in thy new livery.—Well, Ippolito, this *is* kind of you.—’

Pietro, who was of course just going to express joy on something or another, here shut his mouth—and Ippolito answered instead of him.

“’Tis hardly kind of *you*, Onorio,—to have kept me here so long;—heartily glad to see you, however.—”

‘So long? why, *how* long?’ said his friend—and his query was answered:

“Three days:—your own letter fixed the sixteenth, I think?”

Onorio laughed, and replied—‘And you always knew me keep appointments of mine own fixing?’—

“Never;” said Ippolito—“I forgot.”

‘And *I too*—’ put in Onorio.—‘My engagement I mean.—Well, Pietro!’—

Pietro had been bowing all this while, a bow to every button of the black velvet calabrian jacket, and pantaloons in which the handsome young noble had disguised himself—not a little to the display of a handsome leg and knee, which completely belonged to the face and bust above. But scarce had the words ‘Well, Pietro!’ escaped, ere the answer broke out like a bottle of cyder, “Yes, very well, thank your Signoria; and I hope I see his Signoria’s most illustrious worship in good condition.”

‘Pretty good,’ replied his illustrious signoria and thanked him; ‘as I see you are too, ‘Pietro—’

Pietro answered hereto, “Why, yes:—my “belief is I am good enough as the world wags “—but as for ‘*pretty*’—please his Signoria, I “am as—”

“As chattering an idler as ever man met “with”—said the master.

“Yes, Signor,” said the man, and Ippolito and he again fell to their snip snap stile of conversation.—

“Go—away—do what I told you.”—

“What, master mine! horses now?”

“Yes, horses *now*.”

Here Onorio interposed—‘Why—what want ‘you your horses for, ‘Polito mine? can’t we ‘stay here?’

“I must leave you—for Rieti,” said his friend—“I’m forced—this afternoon.”—

‘Oh—nonsense!’ said Onorio.—

“But truth,” said Ippolito—“I could but “have leave of absence for three days—which “owing to a circumstance I need not tell *you* “of—have been utterly idled away here.”

To this pettish rebuke as it seemed—Onorio replied ‘Well now, that *is* hard!’

“On you or on *me*?” asked Ippolito and as if his question wanted no answer, turned to Pietro with—“What *are* you waiting for?”

“Your Signoria to make up your Signoria’s mind,” said Pietro.

“Patience!” said Ippolito with that stamp of the foot so appropriate to the word—“I did, an hour ago.”—

‘Then ye’ve been storming as well as *sol-faing*?’ observed Onorio—and added—‘A, stay—Pietro!’

“Signor!” and the man was about to stay.—

‘At the same time order a bottle of canary — of course *that’s* empty—and my tramping has made me as dry as the devil.’—

“Is he dry?” said Pietro.—

“Go and see,” said his master, with a kick which the fellow avoided saying—“It shall be obeyed.”—and ran out: his master turning and enquiring,

“You’re really bent then on this madcap scheme, Onorio?”

‘Resolutely bent on it—my sage friend’—was the answer. ‘But why madcap?’

“Why, it will seem strange—at least to the wonder-loving world—that a Tuscan born—a Neapolitan lord—a son of a baron of Naples—should wed the daughter of an Apennine peasant.”

‘Pah! what’s the *world*? Enough for me if my friends honour my choice—and enough for *them* I should hope that she *is* my choice.’

“Proudly spoken, Onorio; but still”—

‘ Oh I know what you’d say—one *must* bow to the world. I *will not*. You know—and you are the only one I’ve cared to tell—that her father was not always the mere wealthy landholder he now is—(Apennine peasant, Ippolito, he is not,)—his veins run noble blood—have *shed* noble blood for our land, while it was yet worth bleeding for—cursed be the tyrants have made it what it *now* is!’

“ Stay, Onorio, remember—I serve those *tyrants* as”

‘ Nay, bid me *forget* it, Ippolito. But a truce to this—we never do agree on politics.’

“ And pray on what do we?” asked his friend.

‘ Surely,’ said Onorio, ‘ in confounding this rascally waiter, who makes us wait for our wine so long ;—oh !—talk of the devil’

“ And a bottle of Canary will come?—a sorry application of the proverb ;” said Ippolito as the boy of the inn came in.

‘ Or a happy one ;’ said Onorio as he welcomed the flaggon.

And the proverb in another way was not so ill applied, — for if the demon of ugliness ever possessed any of man’s race—it was this fellow Ladrone, as he was called.—His family name was Lardone,—and its origin probably had some connection with the recorded fact, that of all that family,

none within the memory of man was ever known free from an inordinate passion for bacon. That name however seemed likely to become extinct; for the only surviving representative of a very ancient bacon eating family was this promising youth Faloppa Lardone—who, for some reason or other, was always called for—even by strangers frequenting this house of *entertainment* for *man* at least, if not for beast,—yea, even at first sight, Faloppa was invariably addressed by the ill-omened name of Ladrone, without even the courtesy of a question whether the pronunciation was correct.—When the house happened to be full from the meeting of one or two parties of travellers—it was an ugly word to hear echoing over the house—*Ladrone! Ladrone!* “Great thief! Great thief!” followed by the everlasting *Son qua*—“I’m here”—as he stood scowling and squinting at your elbow. For be it understood his eyes had that mysterious gaze which admits not of analysis.—You might have thought he had been of a quarrelsome temper—for his very “optic orbs” always thwarted each other: but if you thought again you might suspect it was on purpose to conceal what either one was looking at: and they succeeded. When he stood a member of congress, deliberating on a reckoning—if you happened to be paymaster, you could not affirm if he looked at your

purse strings, or the ring on your neighbour's finger ;—one of the two you might be almost sure of—for the slinking Ladrone never *seemed* to look you in the face. His beard was clipped ;—and no one hair of it seemed to own fellowship with any other ;—scarcely half an inch long—yet not far short of it—the bristles stood like a row of boar-spears in an ancient hunt, or a line of chevaux-de-frise in front of a modern tea garden. His hair was carrotty, greasy, and clotted : conjuring to the imagination a mad rat-catcher whose scalp was adorned with the “*spolia opima*” of his conquests. When he smiled,—and Ladrone's temper made smiles his element,—the range of dark teeth within that cavern of a mouth was truly chaotic : two terrible dog-teeth protruded indeed on the left side, even when his mouth was closed—and these had given to the contour of his lips an irregular lop-sidedness, not generally favorable to the expression of those features of love. His ears were of the same wild character—angular and distorted—huge and full of motion as an ass's, but not possessed either of such length or symmetry.—He was what has been called an “in-kneed genius,” and wore a therefore very becoming costume, that is the same as Onorio's present dress—pantaloons and a black velvet jacket—but with this difference—that Ladrone's were studded and embroidered over with buttons and guards of tinsel silver.—Such was the being who after

putting down the good canary—was now about to hobble out of the room,—for cat-footed and stealthy though he was, he hobbled. Indeed it was thought his natural gait had been a shuffle, but that he hobbled to tread silyly and softly.

But Ladrone's ear might have bespoke a listener in him; and it quivered just now to these words of Ippolito's; "and you travel unarmed and unattended thus " to Leonessa? " —I mean the *place*, not its namesake,—your " love—if indeed *she* be your love."

'And why not?' asked Onorio.

"Oh!" answered Ippolito. "I know not " why not. To be sure Leonessa was painted " as brightly as her sister, in the left-handed " letter I had of you, ere I was called out upon " service, and your father flew off with you " into Tuscany.—Remember, till this letter of " yours to meet me here, days ago, we have " been unable to communicate since."

'Well, Ippolito, Epicurean or Stoic which-
' ever you are—you *are* a tolerably, or I might
' say an intolerably—indifferent friend; I wrote
' in plain words that *I loved Leonessa*.'

"What of that, man? when the moment I
" received it, on the Strada di Toledo, I tore
" off that name *Leonessa* and threw it in the
" kennel."

'To the devil with your donship, what
meanest thou by that?'

"*Thou?* and in that tone, Onorio!—be quiet—

“ be quiet. You’ve knocked my wine over.
“ I’ll tell you—I’ll tell you. Sit down.—This
“ name, you must know—Leonessa—(a very
“ beautiful one—like Leonora—and Caterina
“ —let us drink them all three)—by the bye,
“ Pietro *eat* Leonessa—be quiet now.”

‘ I say’—said Onorio sternly ‘ Is Ippolito
‘ di Creta *so* changed by kissing a Viceroy’s
‘ hand and wearing a satin-slashed doublet, as
‘ really to be trifling thus with one he loved—
‘ or said he loved ?’

“ That was hardly said like him I loved,
“ Onorio. But *I* have to ask pardon.—You
“ remember the words *read this in a mirror?*”

‘ Signor Ippolito, yes : and who wrote them ;
‘ —I remember.’

“ ‘ M ! well, Onorio, *I* knew *not* that.—I
“ immediately tore off that warning—your
“ lady love’s name occupied the back of it. I
“ —I thought—I was—fool enough to suppose
“ it was a—a secret letter—and this was—as it
“ were—the key to the cipher.”

‘ Cipher,’ echoed Onorio in a deeper tone—
‘ Do your Spanish diplomatists have *female*
‘ secretaries ? Oh—ah ! ha ha hah ! I see—I
‘ see, Ippolito ; forgive me—well but you
‘ threw it in the kennel—and yet—Pietro eat it
‘ —well—well, never mind—you’re a true. . . .
‘ puppy—eh ?’

Ippolito joined in the laugh, but urged a glass of wine.

‘ Well, Ippolito,—truth to tell—I, knowing

‘thee for a coxcomb, be praised Leonessa’s sister so, on purpose to get you down among us—I was in hopes she would captivate thy foolish fluttering little heart. And she *is*—a *very* lovely little girl. But now—*why not* travel to Leonessa, as I am? which is what I asked, or meant to have asked, long ago.’

“The outlaws are all over these mountains, Onorio :—as desperate a band as any lodges fast by your road.”

‘Oh they’ll not trouble the knapsack and Calabrian jacket : if they shook me inside out —I carry only coin enough to pay my way :—and they’d ne’er look for a count’s ransom from these pantaloons.’

“Notwithstanding the shape of the leg—“eh?” said Ippolito—“who’s puppy now?”

‘Not this fellow, I should hope’—observed Onorio—‘what does he here by the hour?—’

This side question was not unobserved by Ladrone—and when Ippolito gave it tongue saying—“which way art looking, fellow Ladrone? and what for?”—the answer was ready;—

‘Please their Signorie,—a little key wanting —that’s all—got it now, Signor.

‘Oh !. . . get you gone then—my Ladrone!’ said Onorio.—

The boy, for such he was in years and in stature, though an old man in hardness of feature,—smiled one of his own smiles, bowed one of his own bows, and went out.

"A double eyed—half tongued scoundrel!" muttered Ippolito. "I don't half like his looks."

'And *that's* very charitable,' said Onorio. 'more than his due to the devil. We're quit of him now though—a great grinning booby! —Well, dear 'Polito, I'm sorry we meet to part so soon—like the wine from the beaker—and the beaker from the lip;—come don't put on those Spanish gloves—you know how I hate them.'

"And yet, you young rebel, they lift a beaker to your good luck on your expedition."

'Madcap as it is?' said Onorio.

Ippolito assented, but added he was not so clear of the likelihood of that good luck, "women are—women: and Leonessa is one:—two years now, isn't it?"

'Two and a half;' said Onorio.

"Neither seen—written—nor heard from thee all this long while, Onorio?"

'No. But I have her plighted word. I was resolved not to see, write, or hear from her, till I was mine own master. I am. I am of age. I can do as I will; and therefore..'

"Horses are ready, signor," said Pietro at the door.

An unpleasant conclusion to Onorio's argument, as he himself observed: and seemed to observe something else at the same time,—for he nudged Ippolito's elbow and nodded at a

couple of figures in deep confabulation : one of whom was the innocent looking boy Ladrone.

"Yes," said Ippolito—"a poor cripple, roaming for a cure to Loretto. I overtook him the day before yesterday.—Hey?—ha! why—he's off at three leagues an hour, I do believe."

'The *very* vow has done it'—observed Onorio.

"That cripple is one of the outlaws—I'd wager my life," said the Spanish officer.

'A queer set of cripples they must be then ;—observed the Noble of Naples.

"Onorio, I wish you'd take Pietro."

'What! to guard me?—Why Pietro could never stand fire, could you Pietro Agnello?'

"Try me, most Illustrious," said Pietro with "mock dignity—; and then added, with a grin, "no—no—I'll stand nothing of *that* sort from "em."

"Take this at least ;" said Ippolito offering a poniard:—"a lancet is always of use on a journey in case of accidents.—I have another in my mail."

'Yes ;'—said Onorio with a gesture that contradicted himself:—"and have any bungler let me blood with it—? No!—thanks!—My inoffensive—or rather *indefensive* appearance is my best Toledo, in these mountains—you know they're full of rebels—so I must not play the gentleman.—I had my cues from my Salvatoriello—poor fellow.'

Ippolito asked if he knew ought of him

since.—‘No; starving of course—and too
‘proud to apply—pooh! what a word!—to
‘make himself known to Count Romano.—I
‘know him—*let my works make me known* he’d
‘say.—But what’s strange—not a Jew picture-
‘dealer at Naples knows him.—I’ve enquired.—
‘Well, I keep you—but did you know those lines
‘I was saying while you were singing—No?—I
‘knew that. They’re his. Out of his folio of
‘scraps.’—

“Say them again,” said Ippolito.

Onorio did.

“Good!” said the young court critic: took his foot from the threshold, and leapt on horse.

‘That’s right—thank you—get over it at
‘once,’ said Onorio; ‘Here’s the stirrup cup;
‘and pledge me to my success.’

It was done. Onorio was left alone. He paid the reckoning for both. The worst thing he could have done—the most indiscreet I mean. For—Ladrone smiled most smilingly.

CHAPTER IV.

It was evening. Onorio was in the midst of the mountains. He must have lost himself—for he saw no lodging-house for the night; and yet this answered to the spot about which, by Ladrone's description, he might have looked out for one. And westward of this place it was to be: the sun was setting—but that way was no roof—no smoke. He stood in a natural arch of rock. This surely could not be the lodging house the accommodating rascal meant. There was a steep road behind him down which he had come: and a steep road before him down which it seemed he was to go:—but the fore tendons of the instep pained him so wearily with the perpetual descent,—that the steepest climb upwards would have been a relief. There was one to his hand—namely to his right; and complete dead wall of rock: but a dead wall is always a mortal eye-sore. He looked out a little

to the left. It was as lofty headlong a height down as ever turned a man's head. Onorio might have gratified himself by going up the road he came down : but like many miserable mortals he hated retracing his steps. And after all, the forward way he thought was the way to Leonessa. So that way he took. But it seemed to end in a precipice,—and he could not well stop himself. So he ran towards the rightward mass of rock that continued all down here, and abutted on the path at the spot where that path appeared to finish. Against this abutment he ran and clung to it : and was happy to see that the path wound, though narrowly, behind it. But as he glanced round it, on first embracing the rock, almost as pleasing a prospect as that met his eye. To be sure, the foreground was a deep gloomy ravine already in absolute darkness : into which this very rapid and somewhat dangerous descent seemed to plunge. But on the other side of this remarkably narrow ravine,—rose as rapidly a winding line of fantastically heaped up crags wherein, just to the right, and directly opposite the giant height, to whose knee, as it were, he clung, was an evidently wide rocky pass ; much below the level he was on — and disclosing beyond a country lit up by sun-set which answered in every point—as the young lover fondly imagined—to the recollection of the country about Leonessa. There was a winding

river in that—and a winding river in this ;—a town on such a point of the river and a town on such another, and a castle here and a castle there—and something everywhere that he could find a name for. But nearer than the scene of all these vague recollections—between it and the rocky pass above described—rose in the further middle distance another pleasing object to a loneless traveller ; the roofs of a large square building with a chapel, as if situated midway down from the mountain pass into the valley where the river ran. Onorio, better acquainted than we can be with the customs and usages of his age and nation, hoped to find a shelter for that night within the convent ; for as such he recognized it. He determined, however to kick Ladrone on their next meeting—for undoubtedly it was no such lodging that fellow had meant him to expect.—Still Onorio lingered—his breast leant against the jutting corner of the rock. The scene was beautiful : but he knew not why—he felt it saddening too.—Leonessa seemed so far. That was one thing. He wished Leonessa had been nearer.—But could *his* Leonessa have forgotten him, as Ippolito so cruelly foreboded.—Oh no ! perhaps she was this moment thinking of him. Perhaps gazing on the very same sunset with himself—and looking back to very happy days, while this was dying.—At this moment as he looked out to trace the very hill

overhanging the river, on whose brow the home of his darling stood, the sunbeams caught something there, probably a casement, which flashed with so intolerable a splendour as to startle him. That was the place. He was sure he looked on Leonessa. On the instant—a figure started up upon the rocky pass beyond the ravine before him; as if it had been leaning on a parapet of rock running across or partly across it. It seemed a woman. But her figure looked unearthly tall moving in front of the sunlight: her few gestures were agitated. They were strangely agitating to Onorio: who felt awe-struck; and once rubbed his eyes thinking he might be asleep and in a dream. He smiled this morbid feeling off. A bell tolled very faintly on his ear, from towards the chapel. It kept on. The wild tall figure still used little action: but it grew more and more impassioned. The bell ceased. The figure stood long motionless. At last she seemed to kneel,—and so disappeared.—As if a spell had held him then till then—Onorio hurried round the crag away down his darkening path:—inwardly ruminating on what he had seen, and wishing—yet not well able—to believe, that what he *had* seen was a mere mortal figure. He may be pardoned his weakness in an age,—when the mere sunset reflection of one's own form on the mountain mists was thought a spectral and gigantic being, be-fooling men with a mockery of their own gesticulations.

CHAPTER V. .

SOMEWHAT long, dark, and dangerous—and very vexatious were Onorio's wanderings to find his way down to the ravine he had to cross—as well as to find out the way up to the pass, on the other side. That way he is now ascending. And now the night, which had seemed to him to have set in so rapidly as he mounted, appeared scarcely yet to have succeeded to the day. He had already contemplated in prospect the hearty evening meal he should make, in the refectory of the worthy brotherhood beyond the pass. But that contemplation was one of the meditations of this evening, which had been and had departed. Still perhaps the effect of it clung round him—for

Onorio's step grew more cheery every movement he made up among the rocks. He had again a tolerable pathway before him—and his tread upon it began already to keep time to a merry old remembered song of Leonessa's sister's;—the tune of which, and soon after the words, would doubtless presently have risen from his heart to his lips—but that suddenly a little strong flash of light smote upon his eye from the rock at his left. It was stronger and redder than a glow-worm's, though seemingly not larger. He stepped back to and fro to recover the sight of it: but could not. He could only trace a faint jagged line of broken light, such as he should not have seen in merely passing, which marked out the opening of an uneven cleft in the crag—like the reflection of some inward fire. Such Onorio concluded it to be, for he was aware that that whole tract of mountain land is volcanic: and that in many cases fortresses have been built, and villages grown around them, within craters which have once boiled over with flame but have long since burnt out. With that instinctive curious pleasure which loves to take a little peep into the beautiful cradle of the sublime, Onorio could not help stopping to admire this phenomenon; and though the orifice was quite wonderfully narrow for any thing to be visible within it—he was charmed by the numberless variety of tints of the same colour, which

the firelight exhibited in its passage to the cool open air—even to a degree of enthusiasm, which would have been inexcusable if called forth by the same effect in a baker's oven, or in any situation more similar, but equally homely. There was a drowsy distant tumult as of many noises within, musically mingled like the voices of waters far in the caverns of earth, heard at a mountain spring by the peasant who stoops there to drink, and fancies 'tis the jingling of bells at the bridles of the fairy-king's knights.—And this Onorio thought was the lisping of an infant volcano whose matured voice should one day be heard more terrible than thunder. Onorio wished that Salvatore Rosa were there to hear it, and passed on. But—another step—and turning the corner of a crag, he saw a blaze of light lie red, though not extremely vivid, on his very path. Two shadows of men were on it. The truth that occurred to him stopped his breath a moment. Himself stopped his course onward: for he was close beside the wild strong hold of some of the justly-dreaded outlaws of the land. The cranny of light—the hum of voices were all otherwise accounted for in a moment.—Now—how to get across the cavern's mouth. Cross it he *would*. He stole on softly in the darkness—feeling the rock at his left for some ledges, whereby he might climb over the aperture—and take his chance for a

descent upon the other side. He held his lips together as if he would have them grow so—for he felt if he had not, he must have panted as though he were hot. But the very breath of his nostrils seemed an enemy to him. He found no practicable way, other than the path he was on. Still he stole onwards, towards the edge of the red blaze, keeping close to the rock at his left; but still onwards. He cared not. For the nearer the light, the darker the darkness, to those who look out of the light into the darkness. He could go no farther. He stood in the very skirt of the shadow. He heard the murmurs of the two in the gateway of the cave; heard the noisy din of the lawless crew far within; but dared not stir to glance at the interior scene. He thought he heard a voice he knew: it was a man's voice of course, and he could not recollect whose it was, and began to doubt the likeness as one of mere imagination. Again he heard a voice he must have heard before; decidedly a man's: but it was not known enough for him to recognise it. It was that of one of the two men within the entrance of the den. He had begun to feel afraid of his insecure concealment, and yet he felt ashamed almost of it—when suddenly the two men turned inwards, and Onorio in the instantaneous opportunity, sprang with one leap desperately over the wide gap of light.

“What was that?” cried one, as Onorio lighted

on his feet and rushed into the blackness of a clump of pines, that occupied the corner beyond; where the road turned sharp to the right, upon that very platform of the pass in the mountain range, which he had longed so to gain, when he gazed upon it and the strange figure there, from the other side the ravine. He heard a reply made; what it was he knew not: nor the rejoinder which followed. He seized a branch and swung himself up in one of the trees, hearing as he did so, a laugh, and then the words, "I'll wager it—what you will. On my life—a startled buck goat. I tell you I saw his horns."

'Horns of the devil!' was the reply; and Onorio saw them advancing nigh him.

"Not unlikely," followed from the other man. Onorio recognised the voice of the man in the mouth of the cave, that he had previously heard before: who continued nevertheless—"let us down the way, and see who has startled him."

'Go where you will' said the other, 'I'll *up* the way—and be the buck goat, man or devil, I'll have him for my Friday's dinner.'

"Be he all three, he'll ne'er fright thee into a good catholic," said his comrade: and passing under the tree where Onorio was, lifted a spear and struck the bough he stood on so stoutly with it, that it rocked again. But he stopped not—and searched about nearer to the pass

than the other, who dived into the blackest depths of the group of pines.

‘A strange escape that,’ thought Onorio—but he saw the light from the cavern’s mouth grow more lively—and in a moment resolved to drop, and make for the pass—it was but one man to struggle with. He was right. He had not a moment to lose; as he touched the ground a torch sprang from the cavern—others followed. He rushed towards the pass of the monastery. He heard too much to hear anything distinctly among the cries which pursued him.

The spearman was at his heels—caught him and pushed him away crying, ‘The devil! thy ‘lord in the tree is he? But I’ll not let *thee* ‘go. The snake! he has slipped through my ‘fingers.’

Onorio was amazed and perplexed—but he made way and gained ground. As he got to the brink of the descent—the step seemed to cease behind—he looked round—saw the spear move rapidly on without turning to the descent—saw the two or three torches flash after it—and heard the running of a dozen men at least that way. His heart beat with triumph—he turned to rush down, and threw himself into the open arms of a man whose sepulchral voice said—‘No—stay.’—

One giant hand half grasped the amazed Onorio’s palsied wrists. The other lifted a bugle to the man’s mouth; and he blew a short note:

dropped the bugle and began with one arm round Onorio's waist quietly to lead him back along the platform.

'Fool! how many art *thou*?' said Onorio in as low a voice as could be audible; and snatching one wrist from his living manacle—seized and drew the man's sword. The other's grasp relaxed to prevent him, and Onorio's other (now freed) hand smote him to the earth—and a sword thrust forestalled him ere he fell. The man lay still. But the torches were again pouring down from the other end of the pass. Onorio walked swiftly towards it—and threw away the sword not above four yards before him on his road down; 'It may be as well to have it in one's way,' thought he still walking fast.

But the men came dashing down the rough crags: and a deaf man almost might have heard their "Halloo there! stand!"

'Good night, ye mad dogs!' said Onorio; but his heart quivered, while he laughed; though no one could yet see him laugh. But in a moment they could. The torches were held to his face—and his arms were held.

"Come—keep us no longer—out with what coin ye have!" said his right hand neighbour with a tremendous gripe.

'Little enough, honest gentlemen,' said Onorio, 'scarce worth your taking—and well worth my keeping—I am but a poor fellow—and my arms, how can I get at my money? Besides—

come—let's have fair dealing—be not like our betters, as they call themselves—pinch you the rich, my lads, and let the poor ones pass. I always thought this of you—else hang me ere 'I'd ha' come your way.'

"Hey?" said one, looking another in the face.

'All stuff!' said the other—'Captain's away you know.'

"I wish the Lieutenant were here then," said a third, "he'd stand our friend I'll be sworn."

'May be; as the wind blew,' was the answer:

But it was lost in Onorio's reply 'Lieutenant, or Captain, I'll be sworn he is now cursing you all, as heartily as I could find it in my heart to do. Heard ye, never a one of you, your said Captain's bugle down yonder, the way I came up—behind me? Come, come, search me if you will, but let a poor knave keep his little savings to spend for himself. Your Captain, I'll warrant, has a booty which will richly repay you.'

"It was not his bugle," said a fellow with a rough short laugh, whose jutting helmet hid his eyes and half his nose, leaving full in the sight, by the torchlight, a well formed mouth whose wild mirth was half allied to mischief.

'Well,' said Onorio, with well concealed impatience, 'can a country hind, that has never been at court, be expected to have ear enough

to distinguish between Blast Captain and Blast Lieutenant. I know nought about your Lieutenant, but the Captain Gonzelli all the world knows of; you're his merry men, surely. Poor folks, as myself, mostly say they know good of him. Me-seems his men have not quite learnt *his* trade yet. Name of St. Gorgolone! let me go to the monastery there, or give me a night's lodging in your den, and I'll pay the same reckoning, and a song, and a health to you all in the bargain.'

"Your most munificent Excellency?" said the merry man with the low-brinked helmet. "Well, I'm off to Lieutenant Sangrello, or he'll fume like a burning mountain. He has some sharp work on hand or he'd blow another blast."

'So will we all,' said another. 'Bartolo, let him go. Andrea, stay search him, and see that he lie not.'

'Good night to you, then, men, and thank you,' said Onorio; and the one or two last voices deeply and lowly answered "good night," as the little body of outlaws sped in broken and quickly inaudible converse down the way, past the cavern mouth.

Onorio thrust his hand in his bosom, pulled out and emptied his purse, and began counting back its contents into the bag of rough skin which he had procured to serve as such.

‘ There, Andrea, you see little enough for a young man to live on all his long life to come—if he meet with one these hard times—else, Andrea, I’d give thee a trifle for the loan of thy torch.let me see, can’t I now ?’

He was interrupted by a couple of impatient groans at some little distance. They made *him* feel impatient, and Andrea too, as it seemed ; for his torch shook and he said : “ Ehey ! what was that ? and who *are* you, counting out money at this time of night ?”

‘ A merry midsummer to thee and no moon-shine !’ said Onorio walking away and pocketing his purse.

But his presence of mind began to fail him now when it seemed most needed ; he walked almost staggeringly—he stumbled over something—it was the Lieutenant Sangrello, whom he had himself laid stunned on that spot, and whose groans in recovering had just struck his ear.

“ Stay—no !” said Sangrello, and clutching him fast, dragged him down and rolled himself on him, and faintly blew his bugle again ;—All the men came hurrying back again with more than their former haste. They found Onorio stoutly held and struggling with Andrea and Sangrello.

“ A murrain of you,” cried the latter. “ Here take him—I’ll cut the flesh off some of you ere soon. Here have I been blowing for you this hour—and fighting, as hard as a rock for you, ye hard-hearted thankless curs. I’m

wounded and half dead, I tell you—and I can't find either his sword or my own—I've held this cursed count, I say, in my arms ever since you were first called out."

This unparalleled lie—or, to do Sangrello due justice, *mistake* rather—(for he had been utterly senseless almost all the time he mentioned) had its effect on the men. They were astounded—especially at the news that Onorio was a count, and the same rich booty they were led to expect.—Conscious however they had received less than they might fairly have looked for at the lieutenant's hands,—they stirred the matter no further—but were proceeding to remove from his gripe, to the cave, Onorio—whose bleeding temples, almost glazing eyes, and heavy nerveless arms attested not only the suddenness of his fall among the rough crags of the platform, but a desperate struggle even after that.—On their first touching him however—they shrunk back again—for Sangrello flamed out with, "To the devil! I say—no:—Shall he live a moment?—a dagger—I tell you:—a dagger." He sprang forward and snatched one from Bartolo—and in doing so, let go Onorio—under whose suddenly released weight Andrea tottered and sank.—'Murderers!' murmured the unfortunate young nobleman,—'bunglers! can't ye do it quicker.'—He opened his eyes and they seemed to glance upon the same female figure he had watched before. It appeared visible by a brief glance of the torch-

light upwards upon a crag, that jutted, like a ship of war's head, over the clump of pine trees on the cavern side of the pass, among whose branches he had first found refuge.—The form seemed leaning on one hand and on its knees—and to be looking over on the groupe in which he formed a part.—There was something awful amid such a scene, under such circumstances, to a young imaginative man's mind in this reiterated dumb show of the same most probably ideal images,—

This moment seen—next moment lost—
Like ruins by the lightning crost.

But momentary as was Onorio's vision of this, still not near—although not so distant figure,—as momentary—quite—was Sangrello's leap back to the spot, dagger in hand, who clutched him by the wrist and cried—"Lie down, men,—in a ring, around us—and look on while I sacrifice this court spy to my—to our revenge." He had an instant held Onorio up half-hanging by the wrist—till the young sufferer staggered upright and fell against Sangrello's left shoulder—who sprang back a little in pain saying—"I had that wound of thee—thou recallest my private vengeance, fool!"—He motioned Andrea, who held Onorio up—and pinioned him by the arms behind, while Sangrello himself took the dagger from his own almost senseless left hand, which hung

scarcely with power to hold it—owing to the wound which Onorio had given that arm.—The torchlight fell strongly on the grating teeth which added horror to the strange wildness of his copperlike face :—and in various lights, from intense red to shadowy brown, and in grotesquely shaped shadows, all black,—it fell also on the ring of outlaws round upon the platform, some crouching like tygers in a path from which was no retreat; some kneeling, leaning on their shields—some sitting on them, reclining on one hand, or on a sword, or spear—some, that had not so far obeyed the command “lie down,” but stood resting on lance or halbert, like the princes of the poet’s hell upon their lofty sceptres.

But before Sangrello could strike any blow, his arm had been arrested gently—but firmly—and yet he was not furious. It was by that same robber—the deep shadow of whose forward and downdrawn helm would have both curbed and quickened the admiration roused by the expressiveness of his fine features,—had an eye searching for beauty or capable of admiration then looked on him. Such was not then Onorio’s. Despair blunted not his eye while throbbing at the heart,—but apathy had deadened even despair: and he looked on the man, unconscious, at the time, that he did so.

‘The Signor will remember the count’s ransom,’ said the young robber in a persuasive

tone: and the words ‘Ransom—Ransom’ went round the circle in the low interrogative tones of deliberation—the short ones of suffrage—and the clear ones of demand,—as each man’s hopes or forwardness inspired him.

“Cursed be his ransom—the Spanish spy!” answered Sangrello. “I’ll fling thee down—let go—”

‘Spy! who called me Spaniard?’ cried Onorio—nerved all over by the words in a moment and but for a moment—Sangrello bitterly smiled, as he relapsed—

‘Hear that. He is not disloyal—’ said the young robber again, adding with sarcastic gaiety—‘or loyal, let me add, for fear now-days of mistakes—The Signor will not thus cut off may be a hope of our land—you know he is intimate with one Spanish officer at the least—high in the service seemingly—but still a man of Naples—may be a true son of Naples—at any rate, one who may be.—Is intimacy treason?—In your eyes, Signor, perhaps: not mine. Were I this count—which thank God I am not’—(he put in with a laugh) ‘I would not cast a friend off because he wore a Spanish doublet. Why, Signor, I would get him to cast that off. I would win him away to the rallying point of the mountain home of our land to rush back in the rising of liberty, and till then, to live in liberty there. The Signor Sangrello *will* hold his hand—till

proof at least.’—The young robber, as Sangrello stamped and shook his head, bowed his handsomely formed but plain helmet, to the egret’s or white heron’s feather which waved in the others—and suddenly let fall the hand he had held ; repeating—‘ the Signor will hold his hand.’

“ Will he ?” suddenly answered Sangrello, as if abashed, and passing the flat of the dagger up and down his thigh—while he scowled on all around as if looking for an occasion to wreak vengeance on some one who should interfere more forwardly, than by the inarticulate murmur of assent or praise, that rose among the outlaws. But he suddenly collected himself—and bowing proudly on the youth who had spoken said, “ My will is—my will. Presume no more on my favour.—Since thou hast words—speak for the simple truth hereafter : or speak in mine ear—my private ear.—As for this “intimate” of that half-bred mongrel Spaniel—it shall not be tattled among the vice-roy’s Signorinas—that he lived, having drawn the blood of Sangrello dei Gonzelli.”

Again the lifted weapon glittered in the torchlight. It quivered as it lingered aloft, like a hawk fluttering ere it swoops,—as though the dead steel, like him who brandished it, took delight in the *anticipation* of a wound. But another mediator was at hand—a stately

woman, of a wild beauty, who stepped up and said—"Signor Sangrello, would you kill a fallen foe?"

With the cruel cold expression of his eye mingled a quite different expression,—one that mostly disgusts a bystander, but most when so mingled.—Then passed over his mouth what on other lips might have been a smile,—and he answered—

‘No—believe me, Signora, I had him *raised* on purpose.—Out of my way, one moment—may I beg?’

Onorio’s spirit, hovering on the brink of animation—and thus delayed upon the brink of *life* also,—again drew open his eyelids. He looked forth with a swimming gaze and said faintly—‘A tyrant among thieves!—how slow—how very slow!’

The woman, whom Sangrello had addressed—turned and looked on his victim. Perhaps it was that victim’s pitiable state which horrorstruck her.—The black eyebrows were convulsively drawn straight—the closed lids seemed too tight for the balls beneath—the teeth were again clenched, though the lips were parted, but the colour of them was almost as pallid as that of the face:—blood still welled slowly by drops, out of his gashed temples, the extent of whose wounds were undefined—and every throb of the veins added length to some of the red streams, that wound down the hollows of the indrawn cheeks—some

of them ending in half-clotted gouty or drops, upon the chin and other prominent edges of the visage: one such lingered just above that corner of the mouth where the smile of happiness and love is wont most of all to lurk.—No wonder that all the woman was touched in her at such a sight. She rushed between him and the now descending weapon, catching at and luckily not missing Sangrello's uplifted arm.—

“No—no—Sangrello,” she screamed wildly, do not—you shall not—not him—he is—he is senseless.”—(She hardly knew she said truth. Onorio was so now)—“Oh look—look,” she went on—“how he is wounded.”

‘Oh!—merciful of a sudden,’—sneered Sangrello, then lowering his voice—‘but you’ve always pity for all but me, fairest of fair Signorinas.’—

Scorn glanced like lightning over her brow. But it was gone—smothered. She knit her lips tight, ere they opened to speak—“Signor, *you* are wounded? Then why not put off this till to-morrow:—Come, come, I will—I—will see to your hurt myself with pleasure.”

She put her shuddering or trembling hand upon his wrist.—But he put her aside after saying—‘No—*you* know my meaning,—Signora, this is not *your* place.’

But that fine woman's interest for the young stranger was not so soon abated. She even supplicated for his life; but in vain—and she

snatched a short spear, or arrow-headed pike from the outlaw next her and stood between Sangrello and his prey: its point against the former's breast—saying, “You dared not do this—were—were your brother here.”

He laid hold of the pike, having thrust the dagger into his belt;—‘*What* dare I not?’ he shrieked, as wrenching it from her hand he raised it, and rushed towards herself with the gait of a demoniac.

All was confusion. Every outlaw was up. One had sprung forwards—the one who had spoken before.—But a swifter than he had leapt in between him and the mad Sangrello: at whose sight the latter hurled the pike into the soil they stood on—and sullenly laying hands on the dagger again drew off towards Onorio.—“Stay, brother,” said the new comer, taking him by the arm firmly—“*What is* all this? Sangrello! whose blood want you now—a woman's—and that woman my....the Signora!”

She was kneeling at his feet and said. ‘No—not on me, Gonzelli. On *him*—on....a—traveller—wounded—badly—and quite senseless—look!’

“He shall live till to-morrow, sweet-heart!—On my life!—Good night—I shall sup alone with thee to-night though—so good night for the present—to thy chamber.”

She rose and walked away into the darkness towards the cave: and never turned her head

to look upon the horrid spectacle her eyes had before encountered.

The newly arrived leader—Gonzelli—formed outwardly a complete contrast to the armed men about his brother, as well as to his brother also.—The latter was armed, and costlily. The egret's feather in his helmet joint has been before mentioned. Two such white feathers trembled over Gonzelli's head: not on a helmet,—but in a country broad flapped hat, which by the light of heaven would have darkened his melancholy eyes to blackness, and which now only admitted to them by fits the unsteady glare of the moving torches. The feathers rose from a silver cross attached to the hat—in the middle of which might have been seen, by any other light, the ensign of Naples enamelled—an unbridled steed.—The rest of Gonzelli's dress was black—for he was not armed—at least not ostensibly, though the ringing of metal, like as of chain mail, as he first bounded in among the torches, might give suspicion of his not being altogether a man of peace.—Completely black too was the short cloak which he wore;—which, though it reached not his knee, was ample enough to have folded twice around his body. The glimmer of metals sometimes broke the gloom of his form, but never for so much as a moment. Belt, bugle, sword, and dagger-hilts were all black. His handsome-featured and brown face was flushed with fresh exercise: and he steadily gazed on

the white quivering visage of his younger brother Sangrello.

‘ Well, Sangrello,’ said he, ‘ speak : what was all this ?’

The answer was sullen—yet not yieldingly so. The tone was determined.—“ ’Twas as she said. Yon fellow wounded me.—I will kill him.”

‘ Is this the Naples count, for whom Barbianca and that set have been waiting, since sun-set, down in the dark bosom yonder?—I fell in with them and they told me some—‘ thing of Ladrone sending us word of one such. If so—we had better now, at any rate, send Battista off to say as much to them, that they wait no longer for no booty. None else will come that way, as it seems he did not.—That’s well, Battista—yes, Neri, keep his spear for him—he’ll run the quicker for the lack of it, and thou lookest more the man for it, handling it so manly—as thou shalt one of thine own ere long.—St. Januarius ! it pleaseth me well, men gather quicker than weapons ; for Naples has many a smith can turn out the latter ;—Spain takes care to turn out the former, Neri.—And so, this *is* the count, Sangrello.—I’ll not speak of *ransom* to my brother : but you forgot he was senseless. Home, men ! and bear the prisoner home : and see him well tended.’

The brothers were left at a distance by their

followers, the most of whom lingered about in knots gazing upon them: while but few went after Onorio, who was borne away down the path; those that lingered, stood out of ear-shot: and Gonzelli repeated, with sternness subsiding into melancholy ‘You forgot he was *so* wounded, Sangrello.’

“You remember I told you he had wounded Sangrello,” the other burst out.

Many of the men, who had gone before, stopped at hearing the high tone in which this was said, and lingered so as to let their leaders come nearer up to them.

Gonzelli turned impatiently away saying:— ‘Pshaw! then you might have been quick enough to manage and slay him hand to hand, like a *man*—though a *fool*. This had been a *coward’s* deed.’

“Fool and coward! Hark ye me, Captain brother, I brook not those terms.”

‘Then mark you me, brother—deserve them not. And mark further: while I am Captain of this band—I will have no such doings done, nor such examples set:—we are outlaws, ’tis true: outlawed by a government we hate—and have a right to hate and war against:—blood for blood—and in full measure—but nothing in the bargain. We are men—men of Italy—we must *live* by the sword—but no need to *murder* by it?—I will not have my name—our name, brother, sullied with aye—sneer—

if your sneer be not *yet* out of fashion—but I will not have *my* name grimed needlessly with blood. I said so when I became your Captain, men ; I say so now ;—if ye have changed your mind—change your head too.’

The answer unanimously of those that heard was, what it is always partially in such cases—No—no ! long live the Captain Gonzelli!—live—live !”

And the worthy Signor Sangrello stalking from them, down towards the cavern, this chapter, reader, happily ends.

CHAPTER VI.

ONORIO is now placed in such a situation that it becomes needful, as briefly as may be, to give a sketch of his captors.

The father of the two Gonzelli had been, a long time back, tortured and beheaded for what he called loyalty to his country, and his prosecutors, treason to their king. The criminal's (or the martyr's) body was delivered to his son and heir, who received as his right, what was granted him as a favour, and, as some hinted, from fear and the desire of literally obliging him. But Gonzelli—the young count as he would have been, but for his father's crime—was not of that temper. He had heard his father swear, that Naples should have a king of her own,—and say that their own sun was to them worth all the stars put together, although

they might be more mighty suns in their own greater systems,—and such were *foreign* kings. Young Gonzelli, before his father's corpse was laid under the pavement of the chapel of *his* fathers, drew nigh the bier and laid his hand on the place of the dead man's heart, and with the Crucifix before his eyes, swore solemnly never to rest from prosecution, by all means, of all the murderers of his father, and every Spanish traitor, even though Naples-born. Such was the scene secretly beheld, and more secretly reported by officials—or friends—or at least agents of vice-regal government. But this was not all their tale. The younger Gonzelli, Sangrello—not more than than twelve years old—had started forwards from the train of mourners, casting off the mourning cloak whereby they would have detained him—he, ever his father's darling, and spoilt in all things, cursed aloud the sobs that hindered him from speaking, and then demanded of his brother to swear him to the same oath. The elder, somewhat roused from his already somewhat melancholy pride, found his eyes by this appeal opened to consequences he had not foreseen—at least not weighed. He put his brother by, saying 'Not now—you are too young to *swear*.'—"Now!—now!" exclaimed the boy, "am I too young to swear by my father's blood that is cold?" I swear by my own that is hot then:—" he grasped his brother's arm tightly with his

left, and ere any was aware, had gashed his own arm with a dagger. He sucked the blood, and screamed "So will I theirs—till this is like *his*," pointing to the corpse, and then drew back sullenly, muttering "Now, am I *boy*, and *too young*?"

Sangrello, in most things indeed, had never been a boy. In his father's life-time he had filled the old man's heart with pride by his first improvisations in Latin and Italian. His lute made music to his fingers, ere he was strong enough to hold it well. One or two of the popular ariettas, that floated over the bay of Naples, were compositions of a boy not yet in his teens. In the hurling of a dart—in the shooting of a bow, whoever might surpass him in power, none did in aim: and the unbroken colt obeyed him, as if the rider's volition communicated itself to the steed. But the boy's spurs were never taken off bright from blood. Proud—bold—quick—and scornful—a check he felt as an insult. For himself and his own sake—he not only feared not, but cared not, though he hurt any one else. The gnat that stung him—he loved to dismember and set it to crawl away with life; and he would laugh, and say he gave it liberty.

Such had been the youngest of the Gonzelli. Such had been his vow. Troops of the vice-roy's were even then as it were bivouacked around every little bower, temple, and casino

in the vast gardens of the domain belonging to their villa. But an unlooked for visit was presently made to the not yet ejected chief mourner of that house:—an offer was hinted to him that restoration might be made of his paternal confiscated estates on one condition, that the inheritance of them be legally cut off from Sangrello or Sangrello's heirs in any case. Gonzelli flushed with a momentary rage—but answered with proud calmness that his brother's words, which it seemed were known, were but the passion of a child; that his own oath was irrevocable—and a man's. It was urged to him that there was danger in that word “irrevocable,” both to himself and his brother: a wish was expressed that the visit had been made a day later and more seasonably. The young man answered that danger was the birthright of the Gonzelli, so long as Naples inherited chains. He was asked if it could aid Naples to bar those his towers against the troops of the Spanish king's established government. He answered, he thought not; else he should not leave those towers on the morrow. He was warned that suspicion was attached to so proud a submission, and that his rulers were too watchful to let suspicion go unquestioned. He answered that the morrow would show if he could gain permission or would seize it—but that the last assertion put, in spite of him, a stop to a conversation which

had taken considerably the form of *question* on *one* side.

More troops, before and in the night, quartered around the mansion;—but on the morrow morning before dawn, the Gonzelli with but nine mounted followers, took their way out—cut a path through such as withstood them—and ere they got clear of them, it was discovered that either floor of their late dwelling was on fire—flames burst from every window—scarcely successively, but almost all at once. The paintings collected by their father—the gorgeous furniture of their forefathers—all were ashes—ere the strongly secured doors could be burst open.

Since that time, the brothers had lived unconquerable in the Abruzzi mountains. In his imaginative youth—the elder Gonzelli's temper, from perpetually meeting with ascendant opinions opposed to his own reveries of what his country's polity ought to be and should be, was verging fast towards misanthropy.—But taken away from this so soon—in the wild, waste, almost barren heights, which the captain Gonzelli made his bulwarks—his scorn of those about him, unenhanced by difference on that one great head, was mellowed—by that same imagination—into pity. All he scorned in them was, in a way, set down to the predominacy of the tyrannous opinions, which forced them to his banner.—For there were times

when he too had his banner.—Though a zealot—though an enthusiast—the melancholy Gonzelli was no fool. Like the sword in his scabbard—the spirit of his people was utterly his weapon: he could sheathe—he could draw it; and on whom he would. He as well as other robber captains of his time—like the knights adventurers of an earlier period—when a quarrel (no matter what) was to be fought for, could throw his arms with victory into the one scale (mostly, no matter which.) Two barons might be striving for precedence in the viceroy's court: and the captain with courtesy, though coldly, would give his services, or sell them rather, to whichever of the two would bid his band the highest price,—as if all party feeling to the state were clean forgotten. Whichever won—whichever lost, it was the same to him individually; though not to those he led: therefore, the party which retained him mostly won. But whichever did—publicly speaking, it was all one to him;—for both were weakened. And the faction of both; as he of the adverse faction called it. And this principle of his was plain, though he was not of the sanguine temperament to set it forth. It was plain; because woe to that friend of the viceregal government, who looked for courtesy at the captain Gonzelli's hands, and dared to ask his aid against a Lord of the true Naples faction, inferior, or superior. The government itself

but once was guilty of this mistake. Spain never named a hire to him again. It may be thought it was a foolish error, to think Gonzelli would let himself to Spain. Not so—to judge from the customary trial: for in this Gonzelli differed from all his brother captains; who mostly—even those treated as he had been—let their bugles blow and their banners wave at every call: a viceroy's or a rebel baron's:—and were said to be “daggers for every girdle.”

It was mostly every where known where the Captain Gonzelli was himself abiding.—Yet he and his chosen band, that of which his brother was his lieutenant, were one three months in one cave, another quarter of a year in other quarters far away—a half dismantled baron's tower perhaps, or encamped on the platform round some extinct volcanic crater. Such were the strongholds of Gonzelli, when unemployed in service of some petty belligerent within or near the dependent sovereignty of Naples:—and such Gonzelli himself.

Sangrello, it may be guessed, was of a somewhat different turn. The boy's quickness had found its level from lack of perseverance, and his versatile powers had but been nature's antidote to the fickleness with which she had imbued his soul. In such a boy, placed under such circumstances, mental strength was scarcely to be looked for. And Sangrello knew himself

weak. Thwarted in any passion—and every act of his will was as a perfect passion—he always then looked upon his brother as a tyrant tutor, even after the age of tutelage was past, whom yet in better moments he half revered—was wholly devoted to—and *tried* to love. There was a cause for this. His brother's calm eye had a spell on his, as man's has on a brute's. As Sangrello stepped out into manhood,—the vanity which had prompted him to excellence in running—leaping—wrestling—and all the training of the bodily arts, if so they may be termed, as well as in the more spiritual ones of the elegant accomplishments, for which he was begotten with a genius—that same vanity made him a daring and adventurous gallant. And the hair-breath scapes which Gonzelli encountered after in Naples, sometimes even in its court, and many times in its garrisons, from the romantic principle of patriotism,—the same were met by his young brother, at that time his page, from the equally romantic but less lofty principle of what he and the world agreed to call *Love*—the one from ignorance perhaps—the last from their want of a more appropriate term. And in these wild exploits of this the younger robber, amour and quarrel not seldom went together: for if the headlong youth panted for the lips of beauty—he never forgot his vow, he absolutely thirsted for Spanish blood. For all blood Sangrello thirsted—his

love of strife was distraction.—But not seldom, when the one instinctive *antipathy* was roused in him, he was known literally to quaff the stream of life he had let run to waste in one of “the foreigners.”—Once or twice he was betrayed into a species of insanity in these encounters, which brought him through in desperate cases, only to urge him back to others still more desperate. Betrayed into this at first—he came at last to glory in it:—laughed at it as his humour; and nursed it as his honour.—He had run through all licentiousness; he had embrutalized himself by thorough profligacy. A debauchee—and a drunkard besides—even these were not the *striking* associations of his name wherever it was heard.—His *character* was cruelty: to savageness—to madness. As the lion lashes himself into fury with the claw which lies hidden in his tail,—so did this younger of the brother banditti, howl for a combat with any of the great manyheaded foe; he was seen to bite his buckler’s edges for very fury—and when seen would hurl up his pike—would clench his hands till his nails tore them—and smear himself with blood.—His brother alone could rule him:—but it was a saddening rule; Gonzelli, though fixed as a rock, would half repent him of his own oath, when he looked upon his brother’s face at such times. For a deep vermillion flush would then appear like a patch upon his sunken cheeks just in the centre, not

communicating the least tint with the rest of his complexion, which would still preserve the same corpse-like aspect, that at all times strangely contrasted with the full contour and decided ruby of his lips, and with the glittering restlessness of his deeply overshadowed eyes. And as his cruelty in anticipation was mingled with madness—so was it in its enjoyment with a disgusting mirth.

It may be questioned whether this pitiable object for ever in his sight had not some effect in subliming the elder Gonzelli's temper to that point of mercy—and even generosity—that his crew had been often, or more than once, on the point of supplanting him to raise his brother to the post of captain: who in his more lucid intervals kept them less aloof than Gonzelli did, and was rather in his present station a favourite with them, from the spirit with which he entered into the wild enjoyments of their taste. It had, in those cases, been only selfish terror of him that prevented him from the honour, such as it was.—They dared not unbridle him; and well for them. The station they held among the almost lawless and quite self-ruled communities of this kind that grew, rank as hemlock, over that unhappy Italian peninsula — that station they held but by the name of the Captain Gonzelli, as he was styled far and near, who was proverbially likened to “a brand well-tempered, whose blood would soon rub off.”

CHAPTER VII.

To return to our story. No reader will think it a presumptuous proposition.—Onorio's wounds had been dressed. It was near midnight. He was laid on a couple of thick sheepskins beside a blazing fire within the outer cave of the banditti—a party of whom were immediately around him.—To many particular questions he seemed giving very general answers.

‘Will the signor say who is his noble father?’ said Bartolo:—while Barbianca started up observing half inaudibly,

“’Tis a moot point with me if the fellow's first tale were not the true one:—and if so there's an end of our prize.”—And he went round the fire and nestled himself among a

knot of sleepers, with his feet to the embers, and his head enveloped in his cloak,—which in no long time heaved up and down as regularly as those of his neighbours,—nor is it to be denied that a very vivid snore occasionally rose from that quarter,—betokening more life than there seemed to the eye.

Meanwhile Onorio had taken up the part of interrogator, and asked if he could see their captain.

‘Oh no!’ returned Bartolo, ‘nor even his gentleman of the body. The Captain Gonzelli’s asleep by this—or abed at least.’

“And your lieutenant too?” said Onorio.

‘Oh no! as I said before. Wide awake as the Signor may hear;’ and the Signor’s attention, thus aroused, could plainly distinguish the noise of drunken mirth, from an inner kind of den, to the right.

“I cannot then communicate my name to *him*,” said the prisoner, “in this mood?”

‘Oh no,’ said Bartolo, ‘nor to much purpose in any mood as I think—I heard him, if you did not, swear a deadly oath against you—against your life. So not a word of seeing him. Well for you and your purses, good sooth—if he ask not to see *you*.’

But enough of the Noctes Atticæ of these worthies of the outer den. Sangrello’s symposiacs too the reader shall be spared. Suffice it, that Onorio was thrown, by the above, into

somewhat of a musing mood; and then by the men, into a dark dismal inner cell, because he steadily refused to answer questions that night, to any but the Captain Gonzelli; and the latter was too much of a grand Signor to be disturbed about other people's business than his own; which though it may be thought Onorio's case was perhaps, — still his own people thought otherwise and knew Gonzelli so far cared not a button about the prize. Sangrello the wise among them dared not appeal to, for fear of losing the prize, by the prisoner's losing what to him was at least an equivalent—his life. Onorio may be called stubborn. So heavy a charge against him, to him indeed can now matter little—but to his family, if any descendant yet remain, it is of mighty consequence—and worth a trifle of prosing to remove it. The fact is then, it wanted but a little hint to rouse his wariness, with his remembrance of what he had seen of Sangrello. Onorio's father's name—as Onorio thought at least—was not to be trusted to the chance of Sangrello's learning it. So let him lie in chains—and by this time fast asleep.

What his dreams were he never remembered, so it would be difficult to record them;—but he was wondering whether, or no, he were asleep and dreaming—when the voice of Salvatore Rosa seemed to end his doubts by saying—‘Wake up, Signor.’

The Signor, obeying the injunction, did awake,—when Salvatore's voice seemed to repeat the now somewhat superfluous command.

“Why, that is not Rosa,”—said Onorio,—half suspecting that he was lying—and certainly without a motive.

‘So!’ said the voice, ‘file through your fetters. Here’s a file. I am Rosa. I will return and bring you out.’

Onorio, between sleeping and waking, was conscious of and returned a friendly grasp of the hand, which first apprised him that his hand had been clasped in another’s all this while. The hand was gone.—A movement through the dark confused his sense of hearing. Then a dim ruddy light seemed to open on his dungeon—was crossed by a shadow—and then shut out again;—but footstep he heard none.—It seemed all very like a dream. With the instinctive spell-bound feeling of a dreamer he began to use the file which he felt within his hand,—muffling the operation on his fetters, with the cloak which he perceived lay over his feet and with the sheepskin which formed his couch, so as best to smother up the grating of the metals. He worked rapidly, intently; for he feared lest Rosa should return and find him behindhand in the work of escape. ‘Only *one* fetter—lucky’—thought he as he accomplished it and was about to murmur, ‘I am free at last.’ The sentiment shrunk back upon his heart.

He had rung the chain in laying it on the rock; and a dozen echoes seemed to multiply the sound.—His heart felt chill as the damp stone he laid his hand on.—He held his breath.—But it was with difficulty. All grew silent. A long time all was silent,—and with a vehement gasp he covered down upon the skins which formed his bed again. His ear was on the alert,—but he heard no motion any where. His eye was alive to watch in the direction Rosa had taken to go out. But no dim lustre formed itself on the darkness to mark the opening door. Flashes and vague patterns of light began, after he had gazed long, to be imaged by fancy before his eyes—but they danced about in mazes or else dwindled back into darkness. A thousand reasons seemed to make him not expect Rosa back directly. Yet the time began to seem enormous. He tried to count seconds under his breath; and from thence upon his left hand fingers to count minutes: but he presently got confused; and mistaking the rapid pulsation at his heart for the regular movement of time,—began his reckoning again with the intent of merely amusing his anxiety and strengthening his patience: again and again he got bewildered; and with his cheek pillowed on his clasped hands again began to watch towards the door. But, even in an hour of such excitement, the weariness of travel and of trouble stole upon

him. His soul retreated to the land of slumber from which it had been forced. He slept quite sound : utterly dreamless a long time. Presently the light of many tapers seemed to grow upon him—he seemed dozing on the altar-steps of a church—and his friend Ippolito and his love's sister Pargoletta seemed advancing as bridegroom and bride. A taper was passed before his eyes by a beautiful boy with a censer clad in gold and white who whispered twice ' He is sleeping ' in a seemingly known voice—and went on murmuring in tones more agreeable to Onorio's heart, than to the person of the speaker.

' Leonezza ! ' muttered Onorio — and the same murmuring voice went on unintelligibly again as if speaking a spell over him —and at last Onorio half started up to the words " Wake ! Onorio—wake."

A glare of light half blinded him, as he answered ' Who's there ?—who's there ? I ask.'

It was a woman's figure muffled in a large thick veil, that had arisen from stooping over him ; she answered—"A friend. Be silent or we are lost," and pointed with a torch to the door, which he could now plainly discern.

' A woman ! ' lowly exclaimed Onorio, confounded between his vision and his memory.

" Hush ! " said his companion. " Can you walk ?

' Who are you ? ' said Onorio.

“Not so loud, I beg. No matter who.”

‘Why this disguise and feigned voice though, my Rosa?’ interrupted Onorio—‘Is it Rosa?’

“Oh—yes. It is your Rosa,”—was the answer but with such bitterness, as had once or twice before startled him in Salvatore, —but which seemed not exactly the *same* bitter expression.—“Come—can you walk?” his deliverer went on.

‘I am very weak,’—said he—‘but I will try. But wait,—am I not fettered?’ ‘Oh—I forgot I had already filed it through,’—and he was startled by the expression of his own exclamation’s echo which ensued—

“Ah! you *are* weak—here, Sir, drink—it will cheer you—it is a simple cordial.”

Onorio felt his heart stay its movement involuntarily; and he asked—‘*Is* it Rosa?’

“Yes—yes—your Rosa,” was the impatient answer.

‘I may trust you then?’ half asked Onorio.

“Why should you not?”

‘I will—I do,’ said he; and he drank—and was strengthened.

A sign of silence—and a sign to follow—were all that ensued,—as they went out through the rude door of his den—Onorio last—into the outer den. It was a perilous passage; but Onorio concluded their only one. On the first step out his conductor stood, finger on lip—and the other hand pointing to banditti who lay

stretched around in two circles ; with their feet towards the glimmering embers of two fires, in deep sound sleep.

Onorio in his turn pointed to the glimmer, and whispered ‘ Put out the torch ? ’—

His guide’s shake of the head and rapid stealthy step forwards, convinced him his counsel was probably wrong—and at any rate precluded his further share in any deliberation. He followed on tiptoe—and felt for his sword, but had none.

His guide was forced to pass between the heads of two sleepers in different circles by so narrow a way, that the woman’s robe brushed the ear of one who lay, with his face raised, on his crossed arms.

“ Confound you ! how you kick ! ” muttered he, with a change of position, which, had it been a little greater, might have been warranted by the unreasonable supposition of his stupified faculties, that his own, or one of his companions’ heads must have been where his heels should have been. Oddly enough, as Onorio thought, his guide *stopped* as the words were uttered—and suddenly extinguished the torch in a crevice of the vault of the low natural roof. Another step of his own gave him, he thought, an interpretation of the action. From the point where they now stood a moment together—he saw, to the left, rather forward, light streaming pretty freely from an

inner chamber, and shadows moving in ridiculously grotesque attitudes. At the same time, from the same quarter, he heard sung by Salvatore Rosa's well-known voice, amid a burst of laughter—

For all at court are practising and squalling,
Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, the rising man,
La, sol, fa, mi, re, do, the man that's falling.—

This extraordinary proof that an alibi is no proof at all—or ubiquity a mere trifle—or in plain English, that Salvatore Rosa was by no means the fair Rosa who had taken that name on herself, and with whom he was now left alone in the dark, or what was pretty near akin to it, within arm's length of a dozen of odd fellows, whose consciences it might be presumed would only let them sleep dog-sleep,—this little fact certainly superinduced a qualm or two upon Onorio's courage. But these qualms he was vain enough, or ill-natured enough, to be half inclined to attribute to her having given him something to drink, which she should not. He felt like a rat who has eaten a bit of bread and butter over night, too opportunely laid in his way to have come there by fair means, or at least with good intent.—He thought he felt poisoned.—But that was most likely from want of experience.—Meanwhile, astonished and struck dumb—he had to follow his conductress (since a woman it must be) right onward, by the

dull gleam of the dying fires, to beyond where yawned the dragonish door of Sangrello's ill-omened drinking room.—It was passed, however—and they stood in utter darkness, on the rudely hewn and narrowing flight of steps, that led up to the open air, where the road went up to the mountain pass.—

His guide looked back; and muttered—
“No—no one comes out.—But I am sure I heard Sangrello say,—*Now for him.*—Sh! sh!—hark!—no.—How foolish to put the light out. No matter—follow.”—

Onorio tried—and stumbled up the steps:—and heard some one behind say indistinctly—
‘Hallo!—head or heels heaviest?—As usual.’

It seemed like a slumberer's voice: and Onorio whispered to his guide—‘I cannot see—give me your hand.’

“No—no—no:” was the rapid answer:—
“Here take the skirt of my veil.—Now—”. . .

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was a neighbouring pass in the mountains—and full moonlight. Onorio and his guide stopped on it. He expressed weariness—and, sinking on a rock, in act confirmed his words. Again the cordial was offered: and exhausted nature drank this time without mistrust—or, if during the draught, late suspicions *did* revive, still drank on in desperation. But the new nerve it lent him quashed any such weak feeling.

‘I can follow you again,’ he uttered as he rose.—

“No;” she answered,—“we—we part here. Your road is now easy to find—yonder it lies—from that rock, where it divides, ’tis the south-

ward one.—*I* should—I can be of no more use to you. Here—here are some jewels”—she put a pair of rich poniards in his hands, with a strange and gloomy laugh. You can sell them—you will want money—I forgot to bring gold—farewell—we part here.”

‘But not surely,’ said Onorio, ‘without my knowing to whom I owe my deliverance?’

She pointed upward, silently.

‘Still *under* heaven—’ continued he more earnestly.... ‘the interest you have taken for ‘me, a thorough stranger, fills me with wonder—’ (he thought he heard her moan, and went on,) ‘as your kindness does with thankfulness. How can I serve you?—You are, I fear, linked with these banditti. Perhaps a captive—can *I* aid *your* escape?’

“No no—” she said, “*I* stay here—farewell—you cannot miss your road—the moon shines so brightly,—(Ah true!)” she added to herself, and drew back into the shade.

Onorio caught the words and noted the action.—‘You run great risk for me,’ said he upon that impulse: ‘fly with me—and save *yourself*.’

“I am safe,” she answered. “I will not—Farewell.”

‘At least let me know your name, damsel,

that I may remember you in my prayers. Tell me your name.'

"Indeed no—I may not."

'Is there no return I can make?' he asked—but with instinctive self-correction added—'no service I mean....'

"None—none—farewell. Leave me—or we shall be discovered;" said his deliverer, both agitatedly and somewhat agitatingly—leave me.—If indeed I knew if you were....whither you were—but no—nothing—do not tell me."

'What?' asked Onorio—perplexed,—but as much by indecision what to do—how to be grateful—how possibly to part thus abruptly from a benefactress, whom he left evidently in a situation of misfortune, if not in his own perils:—as much by this was his perplexity caused—as by the vague appearance of almost caprice perhaps—at least inconsistency about her words and conduct;—'would you ask whither I am going?' he added suddenly.

"No—no—anything but that;" she answered, "nothing—nothing. Farewell."

'Farewell then,' echoed he, 'dear and kind damsel. I have nothing—these....these men have taken every thing from me—I have not even a ring to leave with you as a token of my thankfulness.'—

The young woman hid one of her hands

within the other at his words, and answered hurriedly, "There needs not—any—"

'But,' added Onorio, 'if in after times you want a friend's aid—and will seek one in Florence; you shall easily find one, if you ask for Count Onorio Romano. Shall you forget that name?'

"Oh!...never—never;" was the answer, but almost drowned in sobs.

He took her right hand,—and now indeed bade her farewell. It trembled, but dropped passively as his kind clasp released it;—and he turned in sadness to depart; but his second step was arrested by the words, uttered in a low moan—"Oh Onorio! Onorio."

He returned. She leant faintly against a rock.

'Did you call me? surely yes:' said he.

But his bloodless face—and trembling lip ghastlily belied the quietude of his words—suiting rather the hurry of his tones. Something of this might be attributable to bodily weakness. But that was not all. The tones of that voice of her's startled him again. Twice it had done so,—when watching by the cave's mouth,—then when about to be butchered;—this time was the third. Thrice now a thought had flashed across him:—twice it had died in the darkness of improbability—but *this time*....

'Speak to me, damsel?' exclaimed he, 'is

it. . . . ?' The hysteric sobs which burst from her interrupted him—yet gave him greater strength to go on—'Speak to me—Leonessa—is it you ?'

He stood hardly breathing, and heard his answer : " Yes—yes—yes—it is—go, go—leave me, Onorio !"

The momentary pause which ensued on these words seemed an age to Onorio, —struck speechless, breathless, gasping for breath.—But the pause grew far more than momentary,—for *he could* not break it on the instant. She at least *did* not. A hundred devoted thoughts—a hundred dreadful ones passed through his soul ere he could totter forwards—hold out his hand, or rather make the attempt, and see that it was foreseen and shunned.

He used that hand to rest him on a ledge of rock. It was needful : and he said—'Leonessa! here ?—what do you here, Leonessa ?'

It was the same answer, "Go—leave me—Onorio !"

There was so much of the old tone in it, that all the dreadful feelings, which had torn him, seemed to be charmed away by the simple spell.—Onorio was himself again—and simply asking,—'What can this mean ? answer me'—added —'or rather speak not—but fly with me—I feel renewed in strength—come—come—my own Leonessa—

It was true, he was renewed in strength—

for, with every word he spoke, the full tide of joy and bewildering hope came swelling up mightier within his heart—till again he could scarce utter words.

But Leonessa said—“Oh no—come not near me—away! I am. . . .oh! touch me not.”

‘How—you avoid me? Leonessa!—’

“Have I not—have I not cause, Onorio? Have you not made me what I am?”

‘*What?*—how?’ he added, ‘I understand you not. What have I made you?’

“Aye—you look wonderstruck: you understand me not?”

‘No—by—’

“Never swear, but hear then. You, Onorio, “are you not to blame for all my sufferings and “all my guilt?”

‘Guilt!’ echoed from Onorio’s lips.

“Hear me, I say. You have roused the fiend up in me—or it *is* roused—no matter how—and will have sway.” She went on in a smothered but awfully distinct whisper, “I repeat *you* are to blame—*you*—Count Onorio!—*Count!* when you came and courted me at my father’s poor cottage, and won my love—you were no count, only a lonely and disinherited gentleman you pretended to be—and as such you won my love, as such you had my plight—you raised in me high thoughts of romance, you taught me to be proud—and you left me—you *said* it, to

gain your guardian's consent to make me your wife — because you had *some* property you would not willingly lose—I am in your recollection, Sir ?”

‘Go on.’

“I shall. You promised to return, and wed me: and weeks and months rolled on, and you came not—sent not—till my hopes withered into doubts—and they rotted into despair—then—”

‘Leonessa, my life, hear me; I will account—’

“Speak not yet; my tale is not yet told:—then, after a year—aye and more—had past; and I had heard not of you—one night Gonzelli—that is the Banditti of these mountains fell on our village—they were resisted—and in revenge burned many houses — *ours* among them—and *I*—my sister—ha! ha! was away from home—and I—ha! ha! ha! I was carried by the Banitti hither”—(she hid her face, as if in fear from the rocks, which echoed the convulsive mockery of merriment, that arose from her lips.)

It was horrible to Onorio—as his exclamations told in smothered tones — ‘But still, ‘dearest Leonessa, blame not *me* for this—at least not now—and not now will I seek to explain my conduct—only saying this, that as I had the fullest faith in your love and truth, you should have had the same in mine; for

they were worthy of it Leonessa.—And now you will no longer shrink from me—now you will come—fly with me to your own home again.’

“No no:—no, I say—let go my hand—dreadful!—let go my hand! I will not go with you—” and she clung to the rock by which she had leant.

‘Leonessa!—Oh God! that shocking thought comes lightning-like on my brain: you *will* not go with me?—you are then a—a—a willing captive here? Answer me, Leonessa, are you—are you wedded to this?’....

Overwhelmed again by the intense feeling of circumstance or chances, he again left room for Leonessa’s answer, as he roused her from a stupor into which she had been plunged—

“Ask me not—ask me nothing—I will answer nothing—not *that*—that I cannot—must not—WILL not—”

Instinctively — even mechanically,—Onorio gave utterance to the truth, that she distracted him—that a thousand fearful thoughts were thronging on him, each *more* fearful than the last. He conjured her—he conjured “Leonessa”—he was on his knees to her—for the first time for so long—conjuring her to tell him if she were—wedded—

But his words were stayed—her hand was before his mouth, and she said “Sh! some one *is* coming—here—hide yourself—quick!—quick—!”

There was a cleft in a huge rock from top to bottom, just wide enough for one to go in—To that Onorio sped—but started back, it was continued in a gulf below his feet.

“Yes—that will do ;” said Leonessa, “down sprang there—down quickly !”

And though he knew not its depth, he straight forward down.

CHAPTER IX.

LEONESSA knew the gap down which she bade Onorio leap too well to dread his being harmed by the descent, which under the circumstances was certainly a bold step on his part. He found himself, however, on a soft strip of grass sward, about two feet in breadth by perhaps twenty in length—covering the accretion of soil, which had, in a long course of time, filled up the bottom of this gradually converging cleft down into the bosom of the rocks. Before him, at the other end, this little gallery was open to a precipice view of distant mountains and vales under foot, at a depth inscrutable to the eye, at least by the light afforded him—that of the night alone. On either hand were the naked smooth walls as high as could be seen—smooth in surface but undulating in their length of line, and

each convexity answering a concavity in the other. Behind him was of course the slight height he had leapt from, looking as high as it could, and quite as black underneath the moon. His situation was much that of a pea in a pea-pod when one end is gently and insinuatingly opened by the finger of your cook's fair hand—or by your own for that matter. But he had little time for framing similes of beauty or sublimity, for he had already had his ears awakened to the maundering unintelligible tones of a drunkard's soliloquy, who seemed coming out on the platform where he had left Leonessa. Onorio's heart beat with vexation. He stamped on the ground.

At the next moment he heard, in the same irregular accents, the words “Hallo! who goes there! speak, or I shoot:—No?—so then—”

The strong twang of a bowstring was heard—and in a voice of absolute thunder, (which Onorio recognized as that of Sangrello, having become first acquainted with it under such remarkable circumstances)—the words followed “Curse the string!—I swear—I've cut my ear off, (our readers probably may cry ‘question!’ to this little hyperbole of Sangrello's)

“Who the devil *are* you?”

A pause ensued—but not of silence. A sound of a struggle followed, but no words till these in the same voice—“What—yes—Leonessa!”

And the almost inarticulate accents of roused

intoxication sunk instantly into a mumbling, tenfold more horrible to Onorio's spirit—the more so, as the words were undistinguishable. Was this the minion that had lost him Leonezza? Either he recollected, by the intuitive knowledge derived from circumstance, that it was not: or else his soul instantly spurned back the idea that it could be. He heard her accents, suppressed, but still evidently mingled with inconcealable aversion. And though her lot seemed now linked with another's, Onorio felt all the lover in his soul for her, while the horrible echoes of Sangrello's hated voice kept coming slowly on his ear—echoes of words addressed by *him* to *her*—and Onorio nigh at hand, and of no service to her. The whole brutal hope, or rather desire of vengeance on Sangrello burnt sullenly within him—mingling strangely the remembrance of the late blood-curdling part played towards himself by the sober butcher with that his fancy painted, as now performing by the drunken ribald in the hearing of Onorio's own beloved. Only to have the strangling of this drunken reveller with his own bowstring—only to have the whirling of him round, and bruising him against the rocks—or the hurling of him down from precipice to precipice—these seemed deeds noble to Onorio—aims of ambition. But in vain. He could not master the ascent. His feet would slip—his hands were torn. Choked as he

was by doubt, dread, and rage—that feeling he could yet have mastered—but that his voice would give the wretch time for an escape. He forgot the little likelihood there was Sangrello *would* escape, if he could. Like a lion in his den—roused by the buzzing of a gnat without-side—so Onorio restlessly paced over all his narrow cell. He suddenly stopped—fearfully anxious—and no less impatient—the voices seemed to rise. He heard Leonessa's plainly—“Keep off—Sangrello Gonzelli, keep off—or..”

The undertones of pleading but presuming licence, again undistinguishably syllabled, closed in upon her words—and again were broken in upon by her.

“Let me go, Signor—leave go my hand.”

‘Ribald!’ exclaimed Onorio—unable to restrain the word.

He had raised himself with his back against one wall of rock by slow degrees, with his feet against the other, to more than within arm's length of the place he descended from. In the momentary stillness which gave strength to the echo of his own exclamation—he heard the sound of an arrow sharply drawn from its sheath—and, as with a desperate hope he balanced himself between the rocks so as to clutch the edge of what was to be his landing-place, the words ‘Hallo! I heard a voice,’ were audible from Sangrello's mouth.

But as Onorio rose in his awkward position, and thought to have mastered the height

with his right foot—the treacherous turf gave way within his hand—and he fell not a little hurt, nor least, in temper.

In answer to Leonessa's inaudible words—Onorio was forced to hear the bandit cry—*'I did, I say—and the voice has sobered me, if I were drunk.—Ho then, come out! whoever ye are: and now I think on't I thought I heard two voices as I was coming here; I'll have the fox out.—'*

"Stop—stop!" cried Leonessa *"put down the bugle"*—and she went on in too low a tone for Onorio to hear more save the broken words *"there is some one concealed. . . ."*

'Not a traitress surely!' thought Onorio; and putting his back to the rock, folded his arms, drew down his brows, and listened intently.

Sangrello's ill-omened voice might to a superstitious ear, have tallied with Onorio's thought, for the former cried *"Aha! treason among us!"*

It seemed Leonessa drew nearer where Onorio stood—for though her voice was very low, it became more and more distinct.

"No—for our lives no signal"—were the words he first caught—and at broken intervals the following. . . . *"soldier"*. . . . *"took me for a peasant"*. . . . *"enquiring if I"*. . . . *"with the brigands"*. . . . *"heard you coming and hid"*. . . .

It seemed she was bringing Sangrello also nearer—for he was heard plainer—almost over head *'Well, where is he? let's have him out!'*

“Hush—hush!” said Leonessa—“he is not alone—there is a band of them who must fall into our toils—come here, and see them.”

As she spoke, there were seen on the further moonlight end of the green sward path, whereon Onorio had been walking, two shadows crossing. He could see that Leonessa grasped Sangrello’s wrist, and he followed with a stealing step.

At that instant he was startled by a slight touch upon the shoulder;—it was one of the long loose roots which were shaken by their tread on the turf above. It was thus perhaps, or from the suppressed tone, that he lost an observation of Sangrello’s, except the words. . . . “overheard us,”...which sounded like a question.

“No, I am sure he has not”—answered Leonessa—but she was evidently a good deal further off. . . . “come here, you see them down here in the moonlight?”

‘No,’ said Sangrello.

“No,” returned she—“here then—a little more this way—Now, monster! for myself and him.”

The words and terrible change of tone roused Onorio; and as he began instantly and instinctively to climb from his prison, Sangrello’s words, seemingly no less in fear than rage, ‘Ha! Traitor!’ struck his ear.

What was evidently doing was not yet done then: Onorio had not time to shudder at the thought which crossed him of the dreadful danger wherein Leonessa stood.

One desperate leap and scramble effected, what successive efforts had failed in—his ascent. He saw Leonessa on the brink of a precipice to his right—she was loosening a hand from its edge which was clinging thereto—and the steel head of an arrow brandished in another hand, its fellow, quivered in the moonlight.

“No—down!—down!” cried she, “wretch! down!—”

She staggered herself—she was falling over—Onorio sprang forward, caught her in his arms, and whirled her and himself round from the headlong and dizzy brink. With an involuntary calmness she put away his arms from round her. As involuntarily, and without any meaning, his hands unclasped to let her go.

“Now, Onorio,” said she calmly and subduedly,—“I am a murderess—for your sake.”

He had scarcely noted before, while he heard it, Sangrello’s astounding shriek, as his hold had been forced off the rock. He had scarcely noted before that the deed had been accomplished.

‘This is frightful:’ murmurs he. ‘Come Leonessa, we must leave here quickly indeed now: that shriek will have....’

“True true,” she answers in impatience, “very true—go then for the love of heaven”....

‘Not without you, Leonessa—’

“And blood on my hands?” said she—“remember!”

‘ Oh horrid !’ said the young man—‘ and heavens and earth ! there *is* blood—real blood—your arm is bleeding—

“ Oh, nothing — never mind it” —she answered—“ here I can soon bind that up—but go—go”

‘ And whither ?’ he asked in a tone of deep despondency, ‘ I was journeying to your home—to fulfil my pledge to you—but now—whither should I go ?

A short pause followed. Then Leonessa all but screamed—

“ Oh is this true, Onorio ?” and then added in a quite low tone, “but I believe you—though it kill me to do so.”

‘ I will still journey thither,’ he replied ; and you with me, Leonessa ; even though all this have happened—and even though—what I can but fear—to the very worst—but even though to me you should be—lost—lost for ever—oh Leonessa ! my heart is breaking—but come—come with me—come to your home again, to your father and sister ; they will take you to their hearts—and *one* friend, one wretched but *firm friend* at least you shall have—and we will try and comfort you—and win you back to—to happiness.’

She fixed her eye upon him sternly—“ Fearful tempter !—look yonder, see ye those

lights moving thither?" she added, pointing, but never looking where she pointed—"away! for life away!"

It was true. Lights were advancing rapidly.

'Come with me then,' cried he.

"Never"—said his deliverer, "I will *not* leave this place—*will* not—mark that: go then—and my—no, *my* blessing were a curse: go, go—they will be here in an instant; for *my* sake—go."

'Farewell then, Leonessa, but not for ever.'

"Yes, yes—for ever—farewell—this way—no—more lights coming thence—pass over yonder fir—the bridge will tremble, but 'tis firm—then pluck it from the other side, and fling it into the stream."

He went; she standing and watching him, in half inarticulate soliloquy: and then she fell and fainted.

He heard the "Follow! follow! this way!" of the banditti in pursuit. He saw the rushing torches. He recognized Gonzelli's egret feathers—he heard amidst his orders the loud words, "a thousand florins;"—he was left to guess for what Gonzelli bid so much. He loosed the bridge of a single pine; as he hurled it into the torrent, he heard the very curses of those about to set foot on the massy timber. His rising from the action only, saved him from a torch flung at his head, in their first disappointment, by one from the opposite side of the narrow, but tremendously deep water-

course. A shower of darts and arrows followed presently : but ceased with the words of one of the banditti—‘ Alive ! alive ! fools !’

“ Too late for that, methinks,” said Barbianca, “ by this token, my javelin is gone to fetch him.”

CHAPTER X.

IT was true. Barbianca's shaft had not sped in vain. Onorio was wounded:—but not dead nevertheless. His game was not yet played out. That it was lost—he would have been free to own, any time after his recognition of Leonessa.

From the thicket, where he lay bleeding, he saw horses led round by the foot of the fall, as if to follow him that way,—but that was soon succeeded by an extraordinary bustle down in that quarter; and he heard the very words of the first surprise, which betrayed it to arise from the discovery of Sangrello's corpse. He shuddered for Leonessa. He could not climb the rocks back again

towards the spot where he had left her. His blood throbbed fearfully under his wound,—he crawled on to look at the scene below—forgetting it was not Sangrello which was the object of his interest.—He clutched one of the stems of the thorns with his right hand—the bush on that side parted wider—Leonessa's own form sped out upon the highest visible point of the opposite bank, like a maniac—shaking her clenched right hand at some one below—and then she bounded downwards, parallel with the course of the stream.—He grovelled on—his lips opened, but he was voiceless—he could see no more of her—she was lost amid rocks and woods.—Clinging to the boughs, he stretched his face beyond the precipitous bank, and gazed still after her—still in vain—but he saw Gonzelli led down the steeper track towards the fall, direct for the spot where the body evidently was.—The robber captain pushed back the man's torch which glared accidentally or designedly too strong upon his face—the motion awoke Onorio to a sense of his own danger—he shrunk—but his eyes caught the blazing movements of many torches below—the red and black figures that hurried about—the reflected fires that blazed for a moment on the fall and the broken waves below, by millions successively, and then died.—He felt sick—his head swam—his bodily exhaus-

tion unloosed the fingers, which intense interest had fast clenched. He felt seized from behind.

—Was he again a prisoner?—

He was not; though the scene he saw on his recovery, might seem at least equivocal.—The sensation of a lapse of time—a long lapse of time seemingly, to measure it by the acting of monstrous, and incoherent, and supernatural horrors, which crossed him like dreams, and wherein he both did and suffered—this sensation, vivid as it was, could not be called recovery of sense. But on Onorio's real recovery, he found himself stretched on a cloak, beneath which, a small piece of stick, amid his bed of leaves, first made him awake to the observation of this arrangement. He saw forms about him, —presently discerned that they were but two. One sat on a low bulk of rock before the couch —his back to the light, which came in among crags of round formed stone. But the face would not have been visible had he sat the other way. His right foot was lifted upon the rock he sat on,—on the right knee was crossed the left wrist and hand, over which drooped the right arm,—and on that lay the face in the double shade both of his posture and of the broad and low brinks of his basnet helm. They deeply shadowed even his neck behind from the sunlight, which showed the sleeve of his vest, slightly puffed beneath the shoulder—

broad armour plates glaring upon his shoulder—a steel skirt upon his loins—the cuish of steel chain mail, gartered with steel above the knee, and defending the knee and thigh of the left extended leg—which with the trunk, bowed head, and arm, formed a line of undulating contour, the draught of which might have served for nearly the whole of an illuminated letter S. The odd thought occurred to Onorio's heated fancy. Behind this figure was that of a countryman—standing—his feet were bare,—one bare knee was on a bulk of rock like the seat of the other,—at his girdle behind, (for his back was towards Onorio,) hung a flaggon.—His sleeved arms rested, one on one mass of rock, one on another, and he was looking out into the open air, leaning towards the right, as if gazing at something in particular.

'I was sure 'twere monks,' muttered he to himself. 'I knew their voices. None but barefoot friars (and shepherds unshod, good faith) may make bold to go singing in these parts, even in broad day light.—Signor, I can see the monks.'

He got no answer. His companion was in reverie. The countryman turned—saw Onorio gazing at him—and bringing his bottle round to his side, came towards the couch. The other started up—looked thither—sprang thither—and Onorio and Salvatore Rosa were locked

in each other's arms,—the nobleman and the painter—the saved and his saviour.—

The countryman seemed to suppose an hour was not wanted for an embrace—for in much less than that time he interposed with—‘The monks, Signor, are going on towards the Devil's Bridge.’—

“Indeed!”—replied Rosa with a smile that sorted ill with the tears on his cheek: then added—“But the fools! know they not it is down—? That is your most excellent Signoria's doing,” said he turning to Onorio. “I have so much to ask you about that:—and so much to tell you besides that—if indeed you can bear it:”—he checked himself—then went on—“Who the deuce let you out of prison—and stepped in between me and your deliverance?”—

Onorio sighed, but answered—‘Oh! I got out, while you were getting drunk and *solfaing*, you dilatory deliverer.’—

“Ah! I half thought as much,” said Rosa, —half to himself: and indeed the meaning was meant for himself—the words only for Onorio, for Rosa also sighed.

He pressed Onorio's hand: Onorio, his—for he felt Leonessa was in Rosa's thoughts as in his own.—He felt it, not thought it;—feeling in some runs first—in others follows thought. Not in Onorio—else that last gesture had been spared,—for he in-

stantly withdrew his hand, and asked—‘To whom was that lady attached—that spoke up for my life?—Speak, Signor Rosa,—you—or the—Whom?’

“The Captain Gonzelli;” answered Rosa. I trust this is the earliest moment Rosa was ever deemed a traitor—even by yourself, Count. I can remember when you lay as now at *Leonessa*, Count.—A *man* saved you then too—though a man was not then your nurse.—Whom stare you at fellow—?”

He took the clown who stood by—by the elbow and whirled him round.—The man ‘made a leg’—and withdrew,—while Rosa turned his face hastily into the darkness.

The young Count Romano asked forgiveness as for the first offence.—The other sat by him. Onorio begged him to tell him all that had happened—since suspense was a suffering he was as yet inadequate to bear.

The young painter Rosa, began his tale of news; told him that, after intriguing the drunken Sangrello out, to await him on the platform for a shooting match by moonlight, he had himself hastened to Onorio’s prison to bring him through the outer cave. Onorio could well have imagined Rosa’s surprise and wavering between pleasure and dread at finding him gone already. The reader can too, if he will. Rosa made a rather long tale of it; his kind feelings and a dash of good sense, made

him think a little beating about the bush quite as well for Onorio's ear. But the substance of his story was proportionably but small, as he confessed, even as many a little comet draws a long tail. Rosa, it is true, made no pun on the subject : nor does his interpreter, except of necessity.—

Onorio heard with good self-command, yet with feelings touched to the quick, not wounded by his preserver's gentle handling of the probing-knife,—that Leonessa was found in a swoon by the surviving Gonzelli ; Rosa being then at hand ;—that Gonzelli seemed to raise her with a feeling and words of suspicion ;—that she murmured a ' farewell ' to ' Onorio ; '—that thereon Gonzelli awoke her up, as a wolf awakes a lamb,—desired ' no affectation of illness,'—was answered she was '*well*,'—charged her with treachery,—at the instant was informed the bridge was down and heard her cry ' Thank God ! ' and struck her as a wanton, for he was wild with jealousy—ordered horses below the fall,—and while giving further orders, had notice of the discovery of his brother's body,—cried—' who had done that ? '—was answered by her, as she sprang up from the posture into which she had crouched at his blow.—' *I* !—I, who will do more ; '—and that then she had rushed up among the rocks to the point in front of the waterfall.—(It was at this pe-

riod of Salvator's story Onorio had last seen her. Rosa alone had darted after her till he lost her—for he began to recognise in her Onorio's deliveress. He had heard Gonzelli shout to her to 'come back,' and her shriek in answer—"I WILL! I WILL!"

On her words he had given up the chase of her—plunged into and swam the stream—speedily searched for Onorio towards where the bridge had been,—and found him in the thicket where he lay.

Onorio's story to Salvator we must by all means wave.

It was full afternoon when the count and "his painter" were about taking leave of each other. Sangrello Gonzelli's burial was to be that evening—that night—or the next morning. Salvator must be back among his brother banditti,—among whom he should yet linger till the interest touching Leonessa were somehow satisfied.

Onorio requested to be an unobserved spectator of Sangrello's burial, if possible.—It was less from the natural curiosity of a young spirit full of enterprise, than from the possible chance which he dimly saw in the future of being again thrown in the way of Leonessa. He knew not—scarce troubled himself to think for what end, this should become a hope to him. Onorio was no self-anatomist.—Hence

this hope, which (had he been so) might have been perpetually changing to a fear,—by its indefiniteness preserved its nature:—and the very indefiniteness already began to impart a sickly cast of melancholy to his character.

CHAPTER XI.

A RUMOUR has been alluded to, that a set of monks had joined the patriots or rebels—or to use a more equivocal, and at any rate a true term—the banditti of the Abruzzo.

It is a fact,—whether a singular one or not—that there did exist some certain negotiations between certain of these classes—and that there was some likelihood of this odd species of alliance, between the antipathies of the polemics of the tongue and sword. The treaty was however not yet drawn up. And the day was now come for Sangrello's burial.—The patriot brotherhood had of course been applied to for assistance at the ceremony—if we may use an expression, so often employed for

giving no assistance at all in a case where the assistants were in fact to play the part of principals.—The monks, however, scrupulously refused the service unless on consecrated ground.—Such ground had been found. An old forsaken cemetery in a wild hollow, high up among the Apennines, — peopled, by village tales, with moaning spirits—and long since dispeopled of its really silent inhabitants, by the indefatigable hand of time. For it was said that one hundred three score and three years before, a populous village hard beside, had laughed and danced under their own festooning vines : had then awakened their infants to the pleasant sunshine—had then covered up their father's corpses from the cold moon. But Maumette, as he was called, passed that way. The well known associations of the middle ages with the name of Maumette, or Mahoud, were not disappointed here. The village laughed there no more. Historically speaking, it was ruined by Mohammed Ebn Morad—the Conqueror of Constantinople—when roused by the quarrels of the Princes of the Cross, he took the Port and Castle of Otranto—ravaged Apuglia and the Abruzzo to the Marsh of Ancona—and, like another Brennus sought, saw, and fled from the Delphi of Christendom—our Lady's Holy House at Loretto. So ran the tradition. But the name of the village in question is unfortunately not

traceable in the history of Mohammed—nor his grandson Selim—nor Solomon, son of Selim, nor any other of those worthies who suffered similar disasters. And this alone inclines me to look on the tradition with a suspicious eye. But this is neither here nor there. There stood the cemetery,—but how it got there others may determine. Though the vulgar legend is doubtless wholly without foundation, many shrewd guesses might be formed, and two or three specious hypotheses might be advanced upon the subject. There are many nettles on the spot : and many of the graves seem of monstrous size—and as many very small indeed : so that it is hard to determine whether it may not have been a summer station of Albion “and his giant brood,”—when emigrating from the east towards Samothea before the time of Brut, the last namer of our island—or whether it may not rather have been a city of the Pygmies, contemporaneous, as all know, with the Theban Hercules, and inhabiting at that early period, a spot not far from where that hero once lay down to sleep—as may be seen at length in Pliny, Orpheus, and other ancient geographers. But I frankly confess I make no great stand on either of these suppositions—nor am I quite satisfied that the place might not be tenanted successively by either of these races :—since the best chronologists allow a considerable interval between them.

But the conjecture here thrown out shall, I trust, find better defenders than myself: and arguments, as yet unheard of, shall make it clear as the Kimmerian question—which now nobody questions.

At the period of this history there stood the cemetery: and there stood the sole upholder of the Gonzelli name draped in a long large black mantle, as some addition to the mourning which he always wore. But he stood not long still. Up and down he paced—and kept asking rapidly-uttered questions of the few men who were with him, as to whether the monks were coming—the watch strongly set—and murmuring under his breath at the cowardice of the ‘men of peace’ that would not trust themselves to *armed* men of war; for all his men were without offensive weapons; and he himself had but his sword. He suddenly asked if there were no tidings of Leonessa, and was answered ‘None.’—She had been away four days. He supposed she was gone home in a pet at the blow he had given her—and that too, on the very day, he had called poor Sangrello coward. “But his probable surmises, and his important questions were alike cut short by the sound of psalmody. It was the monks. For the younger Gonzelli’s body had not been watched and waked with psalmody that night. A pater had been pattered perhaps, or an ave maria muttered, now and then, by those whose superstition had

clung to them, when their religion was thrown off—for few, who know mankind, will avow the two are never worn at once ; but sad tributes to the dead had been paid amid the intervals of time, when the chaser of sorrow, good wine, was awaiting for—or after the chaunt of some rude wail, wherein the praise of the deceased had been forced to touch on the brink of his faults, like a setting sun gilding the edges of the black thunder cloud. Sangrello's eulogy had been on the lips of each—but too strangely and too wildly worded for recording. But none among his comrades felt regret. To do them justice, none appeared to do so.

Gonzelli it may be guessed was not among them. If he waked for his brother, it had been, not at the place of his body—but, if possible at that of the departed ghost. By the grave had the elder brother lain all night. Sleep had not moistened his eyes—nor food nor drink his mouth. The religion—let us call it so—of his wild withered spirit had been afloat on his heart. He had been a penitent all night—which perhaps he had not been on his brother's death, had that death been at the hands of the foes of Naples, an end much more to have been looked for. But it had been inglorious—and many times had that thought recoiled upon himself, — as if ingloriousness were the spectral shadow forerunning something more substantial — ignominy. Self fills

the prayers of the worldly good—what marvel of it mingled fear with the penances of one whom none called good. But from self-reproach—desperate dread of shame, and bitter disappointment at yet unsuccessful enterprise—and from the superficial shows wherewith he had of late been beating off all these as well as disguising them—from all this his brother's funeral was to the bandit captain a most welcome call. At the first echo of the psalm which was his signal, he hurried to the place where lay the body. With no reproach, but a proud bow, to those who had kept him waiting, he took his place. The rude but picturesque procession was rapidly marshalled. The priest was followed by monks, two and two, chaunting the dead language of the land, understood by none else present probably, save the one only mourner of the dead. Then came the manly length of coffin borne by six banditti—each pair embracing one another's waist, and treading, with the nice ear of their country, even and firm time to the slow chaunt, over the craggy and uneven ground—Gonzelli next: and then his irregularly, though but defensively armed troop, at the full length of their slender file.—The distance to the burial-ground might be some ninety yards, winding, and with a very slight ascent—as favourable a way therefore as could have been expected.

About half way stood a huge wooden cross,

in sight of the burial ground. There the monks stopped—and stood crowded in a half moon—their choral habits gleaming in the sun.—The cross rose darkly stooping, before the darker face of an overhanging crag.—But the bearers, spite of the distance and the craggy path, seemed to doubt about—almost to shrink from setting down the coffin on the basement stone on the cross.

Their doubts were ended by Gonzelli's uttering hurriedly, and even tremulously—"Yes—yes—it can't be helped."

The coffin was set down: and while all knelt, such—as could, around the cross—the others in their ranks—amid the silence, and even sneers of a few, it was a strange sight to see some of dark and even dreadful physiognomy, crossing themselves, as awfully as weak women, while a "paternoster"—and then a "de profundis" were chaunting. But strangest of all it was to see their haughty leader. He had thrown himself almost frenziedly upon the coffin—and, though not a sound of any thing like mourning had escaped him before in the procession, he now sobbed like an infant, as rapidly that is,—but the horror of those convulsive sobs was what infants never knew, nor inspire in those who hear them.—On that spot—a traveller, resisting these banditti, had been murdered by the younger Gonzelli with circumstances of aggravated cruelty.—This, though the monks knew

nothing of it, was the occasion of the cross having been raised there.—The falling finish of the psalm was only audible in echoes,—when two of the six fresh corpse-carriers stooped gently to raise their chief. The moment they touched him—he started up—his face flushed—he composed himself by main force and kissing the cross and unbridled horse on his cap, which he had caught as it was falling from his head, snatched his sword from the scabbard and held it pointed to heaven; but though his lips moved and his muscles were convulsed with the wish to speak, not a word was heard. Quick of perception every bandit, that saw him, understood a renewal of the vow of vengeance. The arms they would have clattered on their armour were left behind—but gauntlet and hand made their approbation sensible.

As Gonzelli first heard the sound run along the line,—he checked his effort at utterance—struck his sword into its sheath—replaced on his head the cap whose jewel, seen in falling, had occasioned the incident,—and muffled himself in his mourning habit to await the commencement of the procession.

It recommenced.—At that instant the flashing of the sun on steel drew some eyes upwards—and two figures were observed to move upon the heights that overhung their path—and in the same direction. One was armed—the other not.—It was then discovered

among some of the most indifferent followers, that the mad minstrel,—as they called Rosa,—though he had been with them at the muster was no longer with them: in a little while whispers were running through the whole line of followers:—surmises of betrayal were uttered and answered:—so much was this the case, that as they approached the ruined gateless gateway in the broken line of cemetery wall—Gonzelli himself was roused and darted back a look, which made a “hush” ran back along the file and utter silence followed.

The grave was sprinkled with the holy water—the smell of the damp earth corrected by the delicious incense—

The blessing of the Grave was spoken according to the funeral rites—and the burial was about beginning,—when Gonzelli whose eye had kindled and been alive ever since his turning at the gateway—said—“’Sh! softly!—methought I heard an arrow or a spear.” (Next moment a shot and shouts were heard,) “Ha! the Spanish matchlock! Betrayed, by the breath of my soul! Barbianca, and the last score, back to the cave! matches are ready—light is in my lamp—bring double musketry if possible. Quick! arms! arms!—No harm to you, good friends.” He addressed the monks; but they were already flying in all directions, and he neither made, nor ordered any effort to delay them. “Set it down very gently—thank you, Neri,” (he added to a bandit, who lightened the weight

of the coffin for one of the carriers, Andrea, who, pale as death, tottered in setting it down beside the grave.) “Neri, with thy ten, take by the necks these spaniel curs—and make their muskets ours—as they enter the ground,—lie down behind the wall.—You six lower me down my brother to his grave—I shall guard you;—the rest hide as you can—rush in with shouts—and seize what arms you may.”

He stood with drawn sword, his head uncovered by the grave, while the body was let down—and while he himself cast a handful of earth on it silently—the outposts set to guard his approaches had been driven in.

“Stand, men!” said he, “give *these* your swords;—and never part with pike, spear, or bow—muskets are nigh at hand, rally—in!—in!—stand at least—shame! shame! grapple them—look here!”

He threw his own sword down to Andrea, darted unarmed on one of the soldiers who kept pouring in, and snatching *his* sword, cut him down with it.

Loud shouts rewarded him, and a partial obedience to his former arrangements from within the ruined wall—from behind the rocks around bounded banditti with all manner of yells, seeming tenfold the number they were—many a Spaniard fled panic-struck from the muzzle of his own musket though bearing off its match in his *own* hand.

“ Ah ! Barbianca and his men driven back ! ” cried Gonzelli—nay then we are really surrounded.”—Another party of Spaniards poured in—they stood—presented their guns upon their rests. The silent long perspective of their pieces almost quelled the tumult. Wild mountaineer banditti—full of blood, full of fire—shrunk crowding from the volley—trembling yet angry, with a show of daring, like sheep in lambing time.

“ Fire ! hirelings ! ” said Gonzelli stepping forward—“ we dare die.”

They fired not. Gonzelli was not their captain: their musket line nevertheless commanded the whole burial ground.

But Leonessa, her hair dishevelled, rushed in—“ There—there ! yonder is he—the Chief,” cried she—“ he !—he !—I said I would come back, Gonzelli.”

She was followed by the Spanish commander, who said to the musketeers, whose pieces remained still levelled—‘ Present still !—but take him alive.’

Gonzelli had but glanced on Leonessa—but recognizing the captain, darted towards him, crying, “ Take *him* alive, or dead—for the Gonzelli.”

A desperate rush ensued—but a fresh band had entered with the commander and Leonessa—and the struggle for Gonzelli’s person was as desperate. A strongly-hurled javelin, from

a neighbouring height whizzed through the air—the commander of the Spaniards with cool presence of mind inclined his head—else the weapon had been through his brain—as it was, slouched hat and tall feathers were carried away, stricken through and through.

“Stay, Rosa!—’tis Ippolito,” shrieked a feeble voice—but Rosa had leapt from the crag whence he had aimed, and rushed on the bare-headed officer.

The latter had started back—‘Onorio!’ cried he, but no figure was seen where the voice had been heard from. ‘He here!’ again exclaimed Ippolito—‘nay then, for friendship at least!’

He whirled Rosa down on the ground, bounded into the medley and himself grappled the captain Gonzelli. Whether it were from surprise to see their idle young officer so busy and bonnetless—or from any other cause—the Spaniards at the moment fell back,—leaving Ippolito in an awkward predicament, wrestling with a man twice his equal in power. The young Neapolitan thought this confoundedly Spanish—and a very troublesome piece of etiquette. Rosa laughed out loud to the great wonder of the Spaniards—but presently found there was room in the scene for gallantry as well as ceremony—for he had a young woman almost fainting on his shoulder, whom he could not well leave—

It was Leonessa, who every now and then gazed like a frightened sorceress on the result

of her spells. But it was not a moment ere the fray became again general round Gonzelli and Ippolito—in spite of the idle line of “*noli me tangere*” muskets, the range of which, as the barrels were upstayed on a curved railing (as it were) of matchlock rests, bid fair to sweep the whole field of combat.

Meanwhile Gonzelli was secured by numbers—bleeding and faint. And on the surrender of his (now, at least) heartless followers, an order was given to resume the muskets. Ippolito looked for him, whose javelin had so nearly put an end to any anxiety he might feel about Onorio. But the young man was not among his prisoners. And Ippolito remembering the same name of Rosa that had so lately met his ears, to have met his eyes before in a certain left-handed letter of his friend’s—very magnanimously on his own part, and very considerably for his friend’s sake, forbore to prosecute any further revenge for the affront offered to a hat and feathers, bearing the commission of his most Catholic Majesty Filippo Domenico Vittore, King—and so forth.

But let it not be supposed our good friend Salvatoriello Rosa had run off with Leonessa. Such a supposition would not only be libel but slander.—As though she had acquired strength from Gonzelli’s capture—she gazed on him with quiet triumph.—He was taken in her toils—he whom she had been led—almost to love—he who had blasted all her hopes of love. True,

he had done so only unconsciously. Still somehow or other he had been her deadly fate. And Leonessa was revenged upon her fate.

“Serpent!” said Gonzelli as he past her, bound; and met her desperate eye.

‘Aye! and who taught me to sting?’ she answered,—and was instantly addressed by Ippolito, as wiping his hot brows languidly, he waved his prisoners and the guards away with the other hand.

“Here,” said he, “woman—is your reward.”

‘My what?’ said she smiling scornfully upon the purse;—and was answered—

“The reward proclaimed by the Viceroy for the apprehension of the outlaw. Take it—you have earned it *honourably*—nay, take it.”—She did not and he tossed it at her feet. She spurned it from her, saying—‘Back with your dirt,—my revenge is my reward.’

“Oh! as you will,”—replied the officer, “my men will ease you of it.—On to Rieti! March!”

He hurried to Gonzelli’s side—and questioned him frankly of Onorio.—

Meanwhile Onorio himself as yet an invalid, overcome, with his walk upon the heights to overlook the procession, and over excited by the, to him interesting, nature of what he had seen and heard,—had been some time recovering, on Rosa’s return, out of a swoon into which

he had fallen on Rosa's joining his brother banditti in their desperate fray, and on the vision of Leonessa—and on the recognition of Ippolito in danger—all at a moment.

While Rosa tended his recovering charge,—and one party of the soldiery was seen filing down towards the cave, both for seizure of the plunder it contained, and as a first step in the search for Onorio if he were a prisoner of the band,—and the music of the military march was dying gradually, but fitfully, away, in the direction of Rieti;—Leonessa remained alone, between the buried and the unburied dead.

She was musing like one that walks in her sleep. — Though none could hear her — she asked herself—“ Alone ?”—She returned answer to herself—“ Yes—quite—quite alone—good—as it should be—*very* good !”— She asked herself—“ What was that she stood upon the brink of ?”—She made answer to herself by another question—“ A grave ? what was that lay so “ still therein ?—A coffin.”— She remembered it was her victim's—one of them ;—the other was now—where ?—Where was she herself ? She felt waking from a dreadful dream.—Was it one ? What was she now to do ? What had she done ?—“ What—what—what ?” she kept muttering indistinctly and slowly left the place.

CHAPTER XIII.

IF the course of equity be sometimes slow—the course of justice is sometimes quick. It was not long ere Gonzelli's doom was decided—and on the morrow he must die. As his time is so short then—a digression to his prison may be pardoned. It had been officially represented to him that mercy was an attribute of kings—of which Gonzelli owned himself not unaware. It was therefore offered him to be forgiven—nay to be restored gradually—and under annually decreasing securities for his loyal behaviour,—if he would but first take fully the oaths of allegiance to the King of Spain and Naples,—of the East and of the West. This the bandit refused, on the pretext that

the titles and lands of his inheritance were grants to his forefathers, ere Naples had the honour of Spain's acquaintance; that suit and service for them were not at least due to Spain:—again, that life was not the gift of Spain to him, therefore he should not give up even the poor remainder of it to her,—though she might take life from him,—it was of about as much use to himself to keep, as to Philip to take:—thirdly, that all freedom was as fetters to him, save the being free to help to turn Spain out of his mother country.

“As for my sins against society,” said the self-willed and strong-willed outlaw, “they have been, in the mountains of the Abruzzo, those self-same sins, which, in the mountains of the Asturias, founded that Spanish monarchy which, they say, the prophet Daniel in his book foretold. His Catholic Majesty's vice-roy is to me what to them were the vice-roys of the commander of the faithful and the infidel caliphs of the west.—The difference is—Spain hath arisen; but Naples is to rise.”

The seemingly “heretical pravity” which thus confounded all distinction between a Crusade against Moors and a Crusade against Christians, certainly told but little in Gonzelli's favour. He soon sat in his dungeon—alone on his stone bench, and manacled and fettered.

His meditations by himself were naturally more pertinent to the subject of self. He

would not have cared to have died at the hand of his men—or *alone* against a dozen or so of those “Spanish slaves”—but a felon’s death!—and through *her* too: yet he had deserved it at her hands; he blamed her not—he would be sworn she had suffered more too for having betrayed him, than he had with all their hellish tortures. He would though he could have seen her again—*once* again.

A noise of bolts startled him. Who was coming now to torment him?—He hid his face still more—and a jailer ushered in a Franciscan, saying—‘There’s your man, holy father: and I say, friend, there’s *your* man too; that is, I should say, here’s a holy father come to comfort you.’—

“I want not his comfort;” said Gonzelli.—

‘That’s your look out,’ answered the jailor, ‘my orders are to leave you together a quarter of an hour.’

Left alone with Gonzelli, the Franciscan might have been seen (had there been any observer by) to be powerfully agitated; he trembles—and stands irresolutely. He is not seen. But he takes heart—and whispering “It must be done,” draws nigh Gonzelli.

Again he wavers,—leans his head against the central and sole pillar of the black vault,—and then bends forward and taps the convict on the shoulder.

But he tells him, “Father, ’tis no use. What I have *done*, I *have* done; and would do again were I free. I am not a coward to

repent because I am in danger—nor a fool, to think such a repentance could avail.”—

To this sensible observation one would have thought a true Franciscan would at least have attempted a reply. But the words of the incarcerated scorner: passed all unanswered—nay, unnoticed.

‘Gonzelli!’—said a feeble voice.—

It was plainly no friar’s voice.—It was lightning to the outlaw’s heart—and on the instant he saw whence it came, crying “Leonessa! as I live!”

He had had a vague thought that this would be. At least he, at that moment, thought he had had. He calmly added—“And how like ye my new lodging, lady? but of course *well*—as it was of your choosing—and these trinkets too....”

He rattled his chains—and the fiery glance of eye which he shot upon her diamond earrings was visible to her, and answered by a burning blush on her pale face. The very evening before she left him, he had forced them on her acceptance—and made her permit him to put them on,—against her will; for she had then, as it is known, recognized Onorio. But the same cause—or kindred, or consequent ones—had caused her utter forgetfulness of the ornaments till this moment.—

She unclasped the pendants—and laid them on the bench of stone, but it was without an observation on the subject from either mouth.

She merely told him, ‘ she had come prepared to bear his reproaches : she had come, not to crave his forgiveness, for that was a mere word ; much less to justify herself : she had come to free him.’

“ To free me ? ” echoed Gonzelli.

‘ Aye, if you have heart to aid me, and work your own freedom.’

“ How ? ” replied the bandit—“ I see—that disguise. . . . ”

‘ No, Gonzelli, not so. That might serve *you*—but *I* should be the victim ; and I frankly own, *I* am not ready to die. You have been in the habit of facing and not fearing death : *I* have not feared it till very lately—but *now*—*I do* fear to die.’

“ Your face looks very pale, Leonessa : you are much changed.”

‘ I am’—she said—‘ in mind more than in face—or I had not said what I have just said : I had not *felt* it : no matter. To return to what we were speaking of. . . .

But her words were interrupted by Gonzelli ;—“ You say, you come to free me—*how* ? I ask again.”

The brilliancy of triumph and hope was discernable in the flutter of the bandit’s voice who meant but to express the bitter sense of impossibility.

Her answer was ‘ Are *you* ready to die, Gonzelli ? ’

‘It is the Franciscan speaks,’ thought he—and answered proudly, “I am. At least *I—fear* it not.”

She replied that it was well; well too he should scorn her for so doing, but *that* she could not help.

He assured her that he scorned her not.

‘But you pity me’ she said. ‘I hear it in your voice. I read it in your eyes, even by the dim and dismal twilight of this wretched place. Be it so. I once would have despised another’s pity—now I need it. Gonzelli—Uberto, last and head of the Gonzelli—I said I came to free you. Here is the key to give you freedom.’

“What is this?—a phial?—Poison?”

‘The key, Gonzelli, to open those gates, wherein any may enter, but may not thence return. It *is* poison.’

“Leonessa; you make me shudder.”

‘For why?—not at death?’

“No—at you.”

‘For why? again I say.—That I have brought you thus the means of self-liberation? know you, Gonzelli, that you are doomed to die the death of a felon, so soon as the morrow shall dawn?’—

“Ah! so soon!” said he—“no. I knew not that.”

‘And now you see *why*, I have brought you this!’—

“ I do—I do”—he answered—“ and take it with joy and thanks. This has atoned for all. Your former deed, that has led to this one, was—I believe—one of impulse. *This* fully and more than atones for it:—Leonessa. . . .”

‘ Nay, this too is one of impulse, Gonzelli: not of principle. I know not—I have not thought—how I shall answer for it to my conscience hereafter—oh! that hereafter! I have a *great* deal to answer for . . . ’

“ No, no—Leonessa; you said you came not to ask forgiveness of me—nor will I of you—though I know how much I need it—but mine from my heart of hearts I give you: and we part—as friends should part—as I would part from the best and only beloved of my soul—for that you were—and are, Leonessa, now—even now, more than ever. . . .”

But Leonessa begged and prayed him not to overpower her with words of kindness.

‘ I—I am not’—said she—‘ I must collect myself. We have but a few minutes to be together: let me sit: and listen to me.’

She went on to say, that though she had said she feared death now, it was not that she loved—or liked—life: that was fearful enough; but as the lesser of two evils she would brave it. She should leave Naples that day. (They were now beneath the foundations of the great Spanish castle there.)

She knew not whither she went—but she would live—and repent—and pray—much for him ; — and much for herself: perhaps she needed most. But it was of the past, not of the to come, she would speak. She had been Gonzelli's love, the chosen love of his heart, the companion of many of his dangers, the soother of many of his sorrows, but she had been faithless to him :—she begged him not to look on her so startlingly—to hear her patiently. She told him how, before— a *year* before she ever saw him,—she was the betrothed of a young gentle, who on his travels had visited her father's cottage and sojourned there some time ; how he left them—went to seek his guardian's consent—and, for more than a year, they heard naught of him—she feared he had been trifling with her—and while in this state of mingled anxiety and anger, Gonzelli himself had come and torn her off from her home, whose very happiness was getting irksome to her. 'Oimè ! Oimè !' said she ' that ever it should have been so.' She begged him not to mind her—she would go on. She reminded him she had not been kept long prisoner, but long enough to teach her to admire his bravery and openness of heart—that he had talked of love for her—that she had asked her freedom—and been offered it—and then herself refused it, and chose to stay with him—mostly from real thankfulness and love, for

disappointed as her first somewhat romantic passion had been, she readily devoted her heart to another yet more romantic one. She had done this—she said—mostly from real love for him—yet she now owned she did it partly in a feeling of despair—of recklessness—and as it were revenge upon herself; and that she *had* been faithless to him; for never, from before the hour she first saw him, had she been able to forget, or to forget loving, her former lover.

Such was her confession to Gonzelli—and she then owned that when she had found him unexpectedly in Gonzelli's power—for that yonder stranger *was* *he*—and when she heard the Gonzelli's brother mutter revenge against him—she had aided him—what could she else?—and successfully.

'And for this'—(she continued) 'true you know not my motives—true you knew not, that after he had discovered me—(for I *meant* not he should have known me,—but he did discover me)—I resisted his burning prayer for me to go with him to my father's,—aye; even after he all but knew my—my—what in *his* eyes was very guilt, Gonzelli,—he prayed me *that*—and I yielded not: and *then*—when you struck me—it was like striking fire from the long cold flint amid a heap of powder—I left you—for two days and nights—sleepless—restless—I journeyed on till I reached this

place—Rieti—I was mad—at least let me hope so,—I had gained—I gave the knowledge needful for your seizure—put *myself* at the head of the hirelings,—shared—rather *hurried*—their march—and—you know the rest.—I look not for forgiveness. I said so before—but I would we parted in peace: and yet I could not part till I had told you all this.’

“Leonessa—” replied he, “I have heard it all—you may guess with what feelings: there can be no talk of forgiveness here: for I cannot hold you faithless to me: you could not control your own lot—but better not speak of it at all.—We have been each deceived a little, as to what we thought of each other’s character; *you* thought of *me* that I had taken this way of life from hatred to the tyrants that now are rulers of our land O! would to heaven I had—am I superstitious? or would not this have happened then to me—and Naples. Poor Naples! And yet methinks none have more purely loved her—as yet. I will tell you, Leonessa, I have beguiled my lovers and my friends—well, well—and myself to boot.—Pure love for Naples I had not. Ambition often crossed me—I thought I mastered it—I did but plead for it—it had lurked here—here—in this haughty head,” he continued raising his hand like Cæsar at the Games—“yea, till this very night: yea, till this phial came into my hand.

Ambition — Leonessa. But enough — *one* word is enough, father, for a *man's* shrift," — he smiled with a playful sadness. "And now who shall befriend the unbridled horse? I know none loves that cause even purely as I did — unless it be that mad and nameless minstrel. Oh! Leonessa — and he hath told me, since thou and I last parted, he would that very night have freed this traveller. Oh that thou hadst not done it. None of all this had happened. — Forgive me — Hark! he is coming — the jailer — muffle yourself — and now, Leonessa, I pledge you — give me your hand — let us kneel together: the last toast I shall drink — the last word I shall speak — be — Forgetfulness!"

He drank it at a draught and hastily, for the jailor came in. — His rude and sneering sorrow to disturb their devotions — his intimation that the Franciscan's time was out — his uncourteous help of the unfortunate disguised to rise — his observations how much the confessor was shaken — not being used to it as he himself was — yet his own heart was tender once upon a time, and could feel still now and then, — and his exemplifying this in an unfeeling remark to Gonzelli. — 'You're to be hanged to-morrow, my friend' — and his addition, 'What! not a word at that news! — oh! very well;' — all these things contributed little to reassure Leonessa. Yet she passed undiscovered.

CHAPTER XIV.

IT becomes necessary to return to Onorio a little while longer. He had resolved to hasten on his journey to Leonessa, the place so called, as soon as his convenience, that is his health—allowed him. Himself and Salvatore both agreed it was better he should go alone, as he had such poor news to bear to his old friends there. And so he parted from Salvatore,—as we must do—without the same hope of joining him again.

As Onorio came down upon the village, he hardly knew it again; it was so altered. But that which had so altered it outwardly, had made a mightier alteration still, more indivi-

dually to his heart. This had been the inroad of the Gonzelli, when his poor Leonessa had been carried off.—But the village wore another aspect in another light also,—for there seemed to be some general holiday. It was not the Saint's day of the little village church;—it was not any of the more universal festivals of Pagan tradition or Ecclesiastic institution. Yet the hum and music, and (metaphorically speaking) the sunshine of the community seemed as striking as at such times. It grated on Onorio's soul. But that he must needs master.

There was indeed a general holiday,—for a universal favourite — Pargoletta, — sister of Onorio's Leonessa,—was to be married that morning. The bridegroom was a funny little fellow—and a good fellow too—a young farmer who was called plain 'Messer Carlo'—or 'Carlo'—what else his name was, is not on record; and this is only known from sundry unedited letters of the Count Onorio Romano's to two most dear and intimate friends.

Carlo had courted Pargoletta a good long time; and they were always very fond of each other—whatever one of them might say to the contrary. It is easy to guess which,—for the tongue of one sex in these cases, never says anything but truth, we all know.—But whatever one party might say as to fondness—promise of marriage had been made above two years back; and we all know, however matters stood as to love—

no decrease of fondness can at all sanction breach of promise of marriage—in law : and we all know too that law is the mirror of morality. Messer Carlo it must be owned had all along wished this long courtship—anywhere, but between him and Pargoletta. Yet when the misfortunes came on poor Pargoletta and her father,—he had felt for them,—and then, when a great misfortune came on her father, (darkness upon the old man's eyes) then Carlo had felt for her, and at neither time would he press his wooing. After some time indeed, he had mentioned it, and she had said *that* was not the time to think of happiness—again he was for some months almost a dumb animal ;—for, debarred speaking on what absorbed his thoughts, little Carlo hardly knew what else to talk about. And when again his heart burnt within him, and he could not but break the spell of silence—though he could not deny she had spoken kindly to his heart—still she had been perverse enough to make him make a promise—which, his heart again growing too hot within him,—had not allowed him to keep for ever. But then—she had urged they were still poor—though matters *had* been mending since the banditti came down on them, that is, ever since their poverty had come on them : and she would not marry to be a burden to her husband.—For this march of his fair foe, Carlo indeed supposed he had his countermarch—and

Pargoletta herself, confessed he might have had, and easily answered so stately an objection—but then came the very cream, and marrow, core, heart, yea, and alas! the very bile of the business—so bitter was it to little Carlo--she would not leave her old father. Had Carlo had the least spice of what we call Jesuit in him—he could have quoted scripture on that point: and Pargoletta having, like most women, a touch of the serpent's wisdom, would have over-ruled, or rather undermined his argument, by representing “though man was to leave father and mother for his wife,” it was not written that woman should, for a husband. But in truth neither of them were profound theologians enough to find quibbles in God's word,—though such are the reasonings that often set the world in arms. Carlo's to be sure had been of a less grave, though more serious cast—for it was not hard to see, that though the daughter left the father, the father need not leave the daughter. But Pargoletta's beautiful sense and sensibility urged all her old parent's ties to their birth-place, Leonessa, so unaffectedly, and really so convincingly, that Carlo, like most vanquished disputants, took refuge in anger; and how it all would have ended, is one of the embryos whose nature is not to be devised. For, if it had been probable, that they would have agreed, like good friends, not to marry—nor think of one another any more, such a conclusion was

luckily averted by a decree of Pargoletta's father in Carlo's favour, giving him his daughter to be his wife—which Pargoletta, after some winning women's words—which did not win their cause)—bowed down, into a kind of *ex post facto*, obedience, as in double duty bound.

To have dwelt so long upon a recapitulation of so trivial and light a character, may have been some relief. Poor Onorio found none.—Surrounded by knots of half recognizing villagers—he had, unconsciously half taken refuge in the now open portal of a screen, which made a court of the small plot of garden, west of old Marco's house—the man he was once to have called his father.—He knew the old manor house, as it may be termed, yet it was not what he had known. It had been what is called a ruinous house. But now one half of it was a ruin by fire : and fire being not used to accurate admeasurements—it was now but a smaller half that was inhabited. The old tumble-down place, tumbled down as it was, had used to be in substantial repair, or what is called so—between the exertions of the farmer who resided in it, and the landlord that had never seen it but through an agent's eyes, which do not always serve as spectacles. But now the look of respectability was gone. The long garden screen was there ;—and its tower-portal,—the chamber above which had indeed always, within the memory of man, served as a

granary, or else a root house—but the charred, black, useless gates of that portal had never been replaced by a pair that should see a like length of veteran service, with these which Gonzelli had thus scorched and utterly disabled. The half classic, half barbaric style of building—which had imparted to the old house itself, seen as a whole, that look of almost handsomeness which associates itself so readily with works of some antiquity—this sign of days, long since gone by in Italy, now seemed but to mock the small inhabited portion of the mansion, with the question,—why it should not be as the rest of the same scene. The niches that had once along the ground story adorned, rather than sheltered, statues,—had, when Onorio was here before, each been tenanted by some huge, earthen, vase-shaped flower-pot, and in these had grown fine plants—each one a favourite, of one at least of the happy family. Two myrtles had been called “The Sisters,” and named by the sisters’ names. One of these two was the only one of the set that remained,—and this was Leonessa’s. Onorio had seen Salvatore plant it for Leonessa; himself had long daily watered it for Leonessa. And for Leonessa’s sake, her younger sister had preserved it—when she had no heart to take thought for her own.

Onorio turned aside his eyes, that had gazed on this scene but about half a minute, with all

the agony of an hour's retrospective meditation. He glanced on young Carlo in holiday attire hastening to the house. Each was immediately recognized. Carlo's name, indeed, was uttered at the moment he came up, by one who had been speaking to and of Onorio.

Carlo was delighted to see the Signor ;—
“and so,” said he, “will father be—at least, to *know* you are come.”

‘Your father,’ said the other, ‘I thought he was long since dead.’—

“Aye—sain his soul !—my father-in-law I mean.”

‘You are married then?—or rather, going to be, I should suppose by all this preparation?’ and the change in Carlo's outward man—a complete disguise in fact—was not the least of all the preparation Onorio had in eye, as he spoke this.

“Yes, Signor, you've hit it—I am—and so happy—and so hurried—bless me !—ah ! we never thought to have seen you again, Signor.”

‘Why not, Carlo?’

“Ah ! I don't know, Signor : and now you are come, there's a sad tale for you after all.”

‘Of Leonessa.’—said Onorio.

“Oh ! you have heard then ? Perhaps you *do* know something of her, signor ?

‘We will not talk of it now, Carlo. For as

you say it *is* a sad tale—and you are met to be merry—to-morrow perhaps—or the day after.’

“Oh! here comes my father, and my bride,” interrupted Carlo,—as Pargoletta, seeing him, had led her father from his house.

At this idea of Pargoletta being Carlo’s wife, Onorio felt no agreeable surprise,—for since the disastrous circumstances, which had so wrought upon his feelings lately, his heart had turned yearning, with double hope, to an old vague plan for an union between her, who had been to be his sister, and his friend Ippolito. But from this ideal disappointment, he turned with real sorrow to the poor old man her father, as he perceived him blind.

“For shame, Carlo,”—said the father “to keep us waiting, so long.”

And Carlo, in his modesty, or vanity, concluding there was but one chance as to whose lips the chiding came from—and having, as in duty bound, his head running but on one person—and being moreover somewhat bewildered at meeting Onorio, while himself in a situation naturally most often novel to a man,—a bridegroom’s—Carlo under these impressions, or rather this want of impression, or if you will, this too great impression from one image, answered the father—by an address to the daughter ‘not to scold him, dear girl as she was, for he was talking to a visitor:’ and introduced him to the daughter as if to the father,

(although he thought there was no occasion for it)—saying “Father, here’s Signor Onorio come to see us.”

‘Signor Onorio!’ cried they both,—as though Carlo’s reasoning on the subject were as profoundly fallacious as it had been instinctively short.

Onorio relieved the moment’s embarrassment by his congratulations on the paramount business of the day.

‘You are very good, Signor—you are welcome.’ ‘Signor’—answered the old man—‘though indeed—your name—and the sound of your voice—*do* waken painful—very painful thoughts which have been—you are welcome Signor.’

“I thank you, Marco,” said Onorio, “I hope to have the pleasure of accompanying the bride and bridegroom to church.”

‘Twenty-one last month,’—murmured the lost father ‘no—the month before—this day twenty-two years ago—I married her mother—and she was so like her.’

“Dear father, you are wandering:” said Pargoletta—“Signor Onorio was speaking to you—were you not, Signor?”

He did so now—“I was saying, Marco, I hoped to be permitted to attend the ceremony of your daughter’s marriage.”

‘My daughter?—oh surely—surely’—said the weak old man in self-forgetfulness, more melan-

choly to bystanders, than blessed to himself—
'take her, Signor—take her—and make her
happy, Signor, make her very happy—for she
loves you, I know.'

'Dearest father!' cried Pargoletta and burst
into most afflicting tears.

"What? — what? — Pargoletta, my love,
what was I saying?—oh! I remember—I re-
member now—Carlo, where is your hand—
oh! surely, Signor Onorio, they will be proud
of the honour——Leonessa—tut! tut! Par-
goletta, I should say—give your hand to Carlo
—there then, my children,—a father's blessing
on you—there go—go and be happy."

But Pargoletta's tears, on a sudden, flowed
like a flood! 'I go—father,' said she, 'farewell,
father—Oh! Carlo, take me not from my fa-
ther;'—she clung to the old man,—who said;—

"Yes, yes—go—my dear child—go :—you
make me unhappy by this."

'Oh! I will not do it then.'

"No," said Carlo, whose heart was not a very
hard one—"you shall not—that is, you shall
not leave him, Pargoletta—we will come here
and live."—

She answered, or rather said 'No—no—I
cannot—I mean—nay—come Carlo,—come
—if it please you, Signor.'

But she still remained a minute locked in
her father's arms. She leaves him—she joins
with Carlo the procession of peasantry, as they

move towards the church; and they burst forth in a full bridal chorus as they lead the way before the youthful couple.

But at that, she stayed her second or third step to look back at her old father—she ran back halfway to embrace him—but suddenly checking herself, murmured;—

‘No—no;—it *would* be wrong;’—and was led away between Carlo and Onorio: the peasants following.

Marco found his way along the old burnt gates—and stood leaning against the outside corner of the portal, as though his sightless eyes could still behold them going—for in fancy he beholds them clear as in day-light, or at least clearer than in dreams—while he stands and listens to the retiring voices of the peasantry, singing their bridal song.—It might have been translated thus—with full as great a likeness as translations mostly bear to their originals;—

Joy—joy, to the bridegroom and bride!
May the joy of the present their future decide;
And the flowers, that now
On their path we strew,
Be the emblems of joys, that shall ever abide!
Joy—joy, to the bridegroom and bride!

But another beside Marco stood listening to those voices.—It was one, apparently a female, who came up when they were even out of sight,

and nearly out of intelligible hearing. The robe, worn by the stranger, was loose—and entirely white—being of the natural colour of the wool that it was made from. But the most peculiar part of the dress in question was a very large, white veil of linen—so large as to cover the shoulders completely, yet so made, as to admit but the passage of the hand up between it and the neck and chin: and having, opposite the eyes, openings like some of the Etruscan helmets, or those of King John's reign—in fact, after the fashion very general among oriental ladies, in the first ages of the establishment of Christianity, and still to be met with in some parts of the modest, (or at any rate jealous,) east.

The stranger had not listened quite unagitatedly for she tottered forwards hesitatingly,—and as Marco turned him homeward she flung herself down on her knees—with down-bent head and outspread arms in the way he was to pass.—Feeling his well known way, with the staff he was now long used to, he did pass her—and started back, the female, crying;—

“Blind! Mother of mercy!”

Marco answered, or rather questioned rapidly; ‘Who’s that?—Yes—I am blind—who’s that spoke?’—and this was said in a tone as if impatient for the answer,—as if he expected one to clear up a strange thought, that came upon him.—The answer was sobbed out, in a subdued, smothered tone;—

"It was—it was—I—I spoke, Signor—"

'Who are you? What ails you?'

"I am—I am—a—a poor penitent, Signor—a White Penitent they call me—I only—crave your—blessing—your blessing—fa. .father."—This last word was spoken very hesitatingly.—

It seemed that Marco answered *it* alone, 'Eh?—it is very like—your voice reminds me of—can it L . .?'

"No, no, oh no!" rapidly interrupted the Penitent—"I am quite a stranger to you, Signor—quite—quite a stranger *here*—I only beg your blessing—I beg a blessing of every body I meet—I wander about purposely to do that."

'But how long have you wandered so?'

"Oh! years,—years—years!"

'I am wrong' said he, 'I am—I know not what is come to me—I am doting: do not cry so, child, do not cry—where are you? Are you kneeling?—oh! kneel not to me—here—get up and come into the house—and rest yourself—you are ill—here take my hand.'

Hardly, as it might have seemed, did the Penitent restrain herself from grasping it.

"No,"—she said—"no—no;—no, I thank your Signoria—I am not ill—I always kneel to every one—it is my duty—I will rather stay here—if you will bless me."

He said, 'Nay, nay—come in, daughter'.

And she answered 'Daughter! did you—did

you. . . . ? you spoke of your daughter, Signor."

'No, I called you my daughter—as you had called me, father.'

"Oh! thank you—thank you!"

'But come into my homestead: and I can promise you, my daughter will welcome you when she returns. She is gone to be married.'

"Pargol. . . .indeed, Signor! I hope she may be happy—very happy.'

'Amen!' responded the old father, and again 'Amen!'

"You have—you have only—*one* daughter Signor?"

'Only one.'

"Only one;" she echoed, and he added

'I *had* another—but she is lost to me—dead.'

"Indeed?"

'We never speak of her—so we will not now: but your voice does somehow remind me of hers, very much.'

And that same voice, as she now answered, grew terrifically unsettled;—"Indeed, Signor! it is—it is very strange too—*that*—ha, ha! *very* strange," and again she laughed more frightfully.

But he begged her not to laugh—"You would not laugh, if you knew all."—

"Oh! not for worlds," said she, "No—no—but—is it long since you saw her, (oh God!) I mean—since—since. . . ."

It was a difficult question to be put—for the thought of the old man's blindness had struck her with a fearful force; but Marco saved his questioner—'Yes, child, it is—a long time—but let us not speak of her.'

"No, to be sure not," answered the woman—"only, I *was* just going to ask—if you thought—I have a *reason* for asking—she was not a good girl perhaps?"

'Oh yes—she was—she was—a dear good girl, and loved me dearly, as I loved her—but she was torn from me—and is dead—I am sure.'

"Ah! but now—suppose—I mean—if it had been possible—that she could—if she had liked it—if she *could* have returned to you—but that she—did not—though she might—but staid away:—suppose now, in crime—and had gone so far—as to commit—even—a murder."

'*My child*, are you speaking of—woman?—she could not do one—the least—not the least part of one of these.—I did not mean to speak angrily to you—but she could not.'

"No—no—of course—but—I only say—could you ever—bless her afterwards—suppose she *had*?"

'But—I can *not* suppose such a thing.'

"But *if* she had — *could* you bless her?"

'Pray, do not talk so—you did not know

my child—do not talk of her in this manner.'

"I—I have done, Signor.—It was—in fact—more of myself I was speaking: for I—I am such a child,—such a wretch as I have spoken of, am I"—

'Oh shocking!'

"Is it not shocking, Signor? That's what *I* say—and the reason I was asking all this—was—I was thinking whether I had—any hope—of—of getting *my* father's blessing—I think not, Signor—I may perhaps cheat him of one—but I fear he would—never *give* it me—what think *you* Sir?"

'I cannot tell I am sure; had I such a child—my old heart would break, before I could speak to bless her.'

"Oh! hark," almost whispered the White Penitent, "they are coming from the church."

'Are they?' As Marco spoke, he began to hear the chorus of peasants' voices, gradually drawing nearer and nearer.

"Yes," she answered, "I hear the chorus at the foot of the rock—down yonder; so now I must away."

'Yes—yes!—said Marco—"I hear it plainly—so you must go now.'

"Yes—I must go now—give my si——(she suddenly checked herself)—give your daughter though, my—my——I will pray for her happiness, Signor—and yours—only—before I go—remember—you know, I was to have your

—your blessing, you know—they are coming Signor—Oh! your blessing.”

‘I give it you, my child: and with it my prayers for a higher blessing than that of man. . the blessing of peace, on a repentant heart—go, and sin no more.’

As he spoke the chorus was distinctly audible, but its burden was now,

“Joy, joy, to the husband and wife!”

In the interval, the poor penitent had seized and fervently kissed the old man’s hand: then, rising, she faintly cried—“Farewell, dear father—for this world!”—and she clasped her hand over her veiled face, as though it were visible, and needed hiding,—even from his blind eyes—and she darted hastily away, and was not seen again. But the old man stood as if he had been stupefied: his eyes turned upward—instinctively—as those of men, who see, do in such cases. Onorio had seen and thought he recognized the flying figure and he rushed forwards along side of the foremost peasantry.—But it was most horrible to him to hear how, mingling with the yet unceasing song of joy, came the aged man’s doleful cry

‘It was—it was *my* child!’ succeeded by that pitiable shriek which old men utter.

“My father! Heavens! what has happened!” cried Pargoletta bursting from her husband’s arm, and running up to Marco.

‘And Carlo followed her—and Onorio had

already checked his first impulse to follow the penitent, and was therewith them, when the poor, worn-out, shocked, old man fell lifeless in their arms—the foremost peasants stood round in silence—while those in the rear of the procession were still continuing, in ignorance, their song of—

“ Joy, joy, to the husband and wife !”

THE SHADOW.

THE SHADOW.

CHAPTER I.

‘NAY, nay, nay—my pretty Miss Annie Seymour—you must not be so attached to your very elegant name, as to keep it, till it spoils by keeping:—you could not surely endure to have yourself formally announced, by the freezing stile of *Mistress* Anne Seymour?—An old maid! oh no—you only say so to frighten me away.’

“If so, John, you are not quite the coward I took you for, it seems: for I can’t see that you are going to go—to use one of your own exquisite phrases.”

‘Why verily in your mouth it becomes exquisite, Annie.—But I am not “going to go” to let you change the conversation, my sweet cou-

sin.—An old maid ! why you will never make one worth looking at, whatever you may be now.’

The above dialogue took place—in a very pleasant summer house, overlooking a very pleasant little river, which just at that spot was the property of the father of the—pretty I would not call her, but—lovely Annie Seymour,—who with her cousin, John Lovell, was therein sitting. I shall not try to describe either of them.

‘ And so, dear girl, let me intreat you not to jest upon the subject’—held on Mr. John Lovell—‘ for you know—indeed and indeed, you do—so shake not those lovely locks at me—what an intense interest I take in drawing out your candid.’

“ And indeed and indeed, you are talking very tiresomely just now, do you know.—If you must needs mispend your time, cousin, in making love to me—I cannot help it, you know,—only I profess myself quite innocent. But—if you will, I will not have it done in so very gossiping a manner—with your *intreaties not to jest*, and your *intense*.”

‘ Well, sweet Annie, go on. For though, on my honour, you make me very mad. What is it you are looking out at?’

‘ “ I don’t know ;—and that it is—that fright—. . . . Ah !” — and she shrieking threw her

arms round his neck, and hid her face in his bosom.

‘Dearest Annie!’—

“Dear cousin! dear, dear John! do not leave me!”—cried she, as clinging about him she held him back from the door,—“for my sake not that way—for God’s sake—oh! it could not be fancy;”—she went on,—lifting up her pale face, still paler from the blackness of her slight eyebrows, and from the black snaky locks, which streamed all about her cowering form;—

‘Annie, will ye not tell me—?’

“Oh! do not mind my combs now! There is somewhat—somewhere or another—somewhat in the room,—oh! horrible!—horrible!”

‘Horrible—my darling?’

“Well, well—supernatural.”

‘Supernatural, Annie? is this *you*?—Let us go into the house,—you are ill, my darling, darling love—’

“Pray—do not kiss my hand *now*, John!—No—no—I cannot—that is the door it came in at.”—

‘My sweet girl, why—it is noonday!’

“I know it, I know it,—I am no child.—Do you see nothing—do ye not hear.?”

‘Not anything but your own sweet voice,—nothing, dear, but your own blessed face.—What did you think—?’

“You think me very foolish, John,—but I

am not a baby—I *will* walk with your arm to the house,—Ha ! there,—there !”—

He did see something now,—the shadow—the determinate shadow, as of a man—as of a man rushing swift as thought across the sunlight, that poured into the room upon the floor. But there was no visible form, that cast it ; and, as his heart stopped suddenly, Annie’s convulsive grasp loosened, and she fell a dead weight in his arms.

CHAPTER II.

THE burial of Miss Annie Seymour had been over some days : and Lovell with blood-shot eyes and hollow cheeks sat in the same summerhouse, where that thunderbolt had fallen on his hopes, without a cloud whereto he might trace it,—thinking he was on days gone by ; and longing in his agony for an end to the days that were to come ; and he gazed upon the door and the gay green garden beyond, where that dark shadow of mystery had disappeared. The garden looked still gay—still beautifully green : but it was quiet as death—and there was no golden sunshine showered on it, to mock the rest of the unglittering and untwinkling leaves. Balmy and warm as was the air, clouds covered almost all the heaven : and though it was a day, to mourn in—from

its silence and its likeness to the twilight,—it was not a day to mourn with the ravings of a madman.

We are little aware in our sufferings, what an influence the face of things around us has upon our hearts :—books describe men as independent of this—and man's sorrow, as too often contrasting the repose of a good God's creation : but if we look back upon our lives—we shall find this but seldom so : we shall find that there is a magic in the low charm, that the winds sing—which is not without its working on man's soul :—we wonder, that it is so—our pride is somewhat wounded, that it is but a kindness to our race, that frenzy spends itself in its own lightnings, and that the air breathes fresher when the storm breaks up ; it is happy for us that in our gloom and in our jovialness,—in our rapture and in our agony,—there is a master-hand abroad that tempers the trembling and dancing of our spirits, as the vibrations of the harp strings are melted, one into the other, in the pathetic movements of true melody.

Lovell felt this, but he did not father it on the true cause ; we none of us do ; we like not to be links in an universe, but to seem lords of it—or apart from it. The clouds seemed hung over him for ever ; they looked quite moveless ; had they been indeed so,—he would have seen by their apparent speed that himself was but a fly upon the whirling

wheel of earth. But—there seemed no change in his atmosphere: yet, though scarcely visible, there was a slow one;—for that noon-day twilight now grew brighter—and now almost darkened into night—and now suddenly the sun bursting upon the blue sky, Lovell beheld an insulated shadow stationary under the door-way.

He sprang up; but sickened and fell giddy; and, grasping convulsively the arm of his chair, sank again into it. The shadow seemed to stir in its place,—but stirred not from its place:—while the horrified mourner with rounded eyes gazed on it and upon the empty air above it, till he could gasp out:

“Devil! or—what art thou?”—

‘One wretched as thyself; but—unlike thyself—a *very* wretch,’ returned a hoarse voice of which John Lovell seemed to have a recollection; but the bare idea of that identity thrilled him through the marrow.

A strength, for which he could not account, enabled him to carry on this strange conversation: “You have murdered my happiness; I must hate you; you can have no fellow-feeling for a man of this world. Why are you here?”

‘Pity me, John Lovell; or, if you hate me, you shall see me and can then revenge yourself.’

“Let me see you. Then will be time to talk of this.”

The form of his brother Henry, who had been away from England, and unheard of, since he left Oxford, stood before him. Again John started, but turned pale as ashes; the almost boy—so slight, fair, florid and delicate, whom he had last seen—had become a man, muscular, healthy, with a broad chest and set features. But Henry's eyes had a melancholy roving look, like that of one blinded by a *gutta serena*; and his locks were of that silver white which the hair of a man of seventy years often does not attain.

‘I have seen, and borne, and done what might make the most hopeful weary of his life,—yet I would not drive my *brother* to kill me.’

“Henry!” returned his brother. And the two brethren looked on each other long with equal earnestness, but a perfect contrast to each other in the *nature* of their expression. “Surely this is but a frightful dream,” kept on John Lovell, “and yet I have dreamt it horribly enough before.”

‘It is no dream, John,—unless life is. If so, it is a long and dreary one—yet I may wake at last.’

“Go away from me, brother,” said the other. “How can I look upon you after last friday week?”

‘Last friday week, Sir, was a more unlucky day for myself,’ said the strange being before him. ‘But I quelled the spirit of rivalry in my heart then,—and shall I not, my poor

brother, now, when she I loved and murdered lies at rest,—and we are left to weep—or at least mourn together, for our destiny—for these *mine* eyes, alas ! are not now given to weeping.—I would ask your hand, John, but I dare not,—and you, I see, shrink from the thought of giving it.’

John had shrunk ;—but, when charged therewith, sprang forward to offer it.—But both the brethren, at the same moment, shrank again from the touch of each other’s fingers :—and John, the younger, throwing himself on his knees before the table—crossed his arms upon it, and—hiding his face—sobbed and wept almost to strangulation.

“ Rivalry !—rivalry ! ” — he muttered and for an instant glanced up fiercely at his rival ; but tears again lightened his brain—and he buried his head as before.

‘ We are needlessly wringing our own hearts, John,—*uselessly*, I should say : ’ said the stern and statue-like spectator of his agony.—‘ I have much to tell thee : it is fit that thou shouldest hear it.—Unearthly as are my powers—I need a brother ;—I did not seek one—while he was happy : I would fain have been glad that he was happy : but now he shall know that his very torment is bliss, put side by side with what the causer of it feels. Thou shalt hear. To-morrow thou shalt hear. On this spot meet me—at this time.’

“Stay, Henry!” cried the other:—

But he could not stay his brother, whose voice he heard—(though he saw him not)—on the steps of the summer-house;—‘I go not as man goeth—nor stay when man bids.’

CHAPTER III.

THE following was what passed between the two brethren, when together the next day.

‘ You recollect the year we spent with one another at college, John ?’

“ I do well,” replied he—“ it was too happy to be forgotten,—you were in your second year, when I came into residence.”

‘ It *was* too happy to be forgotten—by the happy : but it is the end of it, almost alone, hath had power—through all manner of woe—to hold *my* memory. And the end—hath indeed fanged it strongly.’—

“ The duel, you mean,—your duel with Brauchling ?”

‘ Aye, I do mean the duel, and its event—

poor fellow !—but—did you know the spring of it ?’—

“ I knew of your giving him the lie, and.... There was nothing—was there?—more than gives rise to so many....”

‘ Yes,—was there though !—*You* at least would have thought so,—had you known, John, what *was* the main-spring of that rapid business :—my brother’s whole life had been altered,—his hopes different—his loves....’

“ Well, what of my loves ? why do you stop ?’—

‘ Well, I will not stop.—I had met Annie Seymour and loved her’....

“ Is this connected with your story, Henry ? If not, let us both be spared—”

‘ As much as possible—we will. I will be brief. It was but the vacation before the affair with Brauchling, that I saw her first :—and it was some slighting words of his, touching my passion, that drew down the bolt, which struck him dead—and paralysed myself. You know of my hurried departure from Oxford and from England. Did you ever hear of me since ?’

“ Never, till....”

‘ Till this wretched now, you would say. But I did of you : I heard of the quiet growth of your attachment—of the attachment, that was between you both ; of your everlasting war of light and laughing words—of the match-

makings—and the match-denyings—and of all the foils that love fences withal and thinks himself secure from even a scratch :—anecdotes were told me—conversations reported. . . .’

“ Well, well, well !—why did you not let me know of your own love ?”

‘ Brother, you wrong me. I am not thinking of that. But could I—knowing all this—could such an one as I, a duellist, a man-slayer, a murderer, foster a hope ? Could your brother snatch the bread of life from your lips ? I wanted change of scene—of course : but that was all I would own to myself I wanted. I went to Paris, Seville, Padua, Berlin, and at each place saw every thing and all the world, and made acquaintance and friends, particularly in the universities : for I was given up to much reading—the habits of dissipation, with which I at first opiated my melancholy, having been quickly found inadequate to lull my gnawing hunger after self-forgetfulness, I flew to my books—as I had used, to my bottle ; and wild and strange books they often were.’

“ Ah ! why did we ever seek amusement among such, Henry ?”

‘ Amusement, John ! I have plucked *death* from them, as Adam from the Tree of Knowledge : for I grew to love such studies—till my heart, even my *heart*, grew full of them, and sought gloomier and gloomier associates, till at last there was none to speak to me in mine

own tongue, and then I sat and talked with my own dark thoughts, like the last frantic wizard architect of Babel, on the ruin he had power to build—and for what? much what *I* too have wrought out by my strange strength. Oh John, John! thou canst guess, and partly knowest—what.'

He grasped his brother's hand which answered the grasp,—and John said—"Henry! when we smiled together over such dreams, we little dreamed they would turn out realities. Or rather you must have given yourself entirely and most deeply to such books, and so your brain.... But, no! that is not all—I have seen enough not to doubt; go on!"

'I *did* give me up to them entirely—most entirely: I *did* give them *all* my soul. I did become buried in them.—I did not know that for even other things they turned my brain: they might—and certainly my *heart* grew in some things most infantine and weakling; but heart—and head too—became more than man's, in prosecuting that one point—in gathering creation up when I would heighten its tide—in animating the world by my electric wish—in yoking the elements—in bridling and breaking in the fiery hell itself. All this might of light I could have concentrated and drawn down from heaven.—All was at my hands: it was not what I chose to grasp. I would not walk among men as a man:—while I was what I

was—I would not seem—a worm.—You know theology had been my earliest study—that, and romance, the elder romance, I mean, of miracles and marvels. You know my enthusiasm—the batlike blindness of my credulity, as we grew up at school. You know how I lingered around the crumbling ruins of that dear believingness, when we were at college! Would you think my first step after the murder of poor Brauchling—(yes! murder—do not gainsay me)—was into the green guileful slough of scepticism—nay, into disbelief. But I was not one to pin the faith of a man, as I had done that of a boy, on other people's doctrines, or other people's dicta. Though I charged on Christianity its misfortunes, as its crimes—its abuses, as its consequences,—I could not—nor I did not try—to shut my eyes, and ears, and heart against the presence of a God in the world. Though I charged on Christ the frailty, folly, and frenzy of lying for the truth's sake, and dying for a lie,—I could not withstand what drove me to examine his pretensions—and, doing so, I could not distrust the witness given to his works. Mind or body—either one or the other—I was now in everlasting activity; for I dreaded the past;—and vowed myself—and gave myself up—to the enjoyment of the present, or the ambitious pressing forward towards the future.—My physical powers I steeled—for I gloried in the growth of their

strength ; and I was not to learn, that to scorn the clay we are linked to, too often makes us slight it—and to slight it, is to slight the soul it is linked to—or may be the soul it is imbued with,—for, however I could not shake off Immaterialism as a reasoning man, I was aware that reason could not prove it.—”

“ But, you say, you had searched holy Writ.”

‘ Neither did I see it laid down in that revelation which I was daily rising to a belief of. At any rate I read there, that the body was to live for ever. But we are wandering—I will go back.—Mind, as well as body, craves variety of exercise :—and much of my time was drowned in the depths of natural philosophy and White Magic ; and the latter study afforded an aid, as I thought, to my belief—as obvious, as it was exhilarating to the pride of man. The Jews named Belzebub and Jesus in a breath ;—fools ! as if Satan would be a suicide !—I came to look on revelation’s wonders—as the works of men serving, soaring to, and singled out by God, for their assiduity in strengthening those intellects and inward virtues they were created with.—*Such were*, I cried, *the Magicians that worshipped Jesus ; and his star guided them, for he was greater—in goodness and in grasp of purpose—than they.* The thought of equalling them and Him bounded in my bosom ;—my purposes should be their purposes—even his and theirs—my prayers their prayers—my

powers their powers. Alas ! I forgot that I was man ;—and if I sometimes dreamed He was more,—I thought He might be more—an Aeon—a God, and yet no words of his be such as to claim the Very One Highest Godhead to himself. Why might not my soul be sublimated to a God !—I found too late that He who proposed my longings, my prayers, my studies—so far as they were worthy, however bold, of man's high nature,—abandoned me when I overlooked his supremacy. The powers I have reached my hand to—as I ought,—he hath not held from me : but I have been let see that, whatever powers we may have, our purposes will be man's purposes, not God's. Fearful—frightful has been my fall, John. My will might have swayed all things ; and I might have prayed for his wisdom to sway that will to things befitting such a sway :—but, when a crown from his hand might have been mine for asking, I pointed like a baby—like that baby-creature man, I pointed to a toy—and said—*I must have that*. Where was the humbleness of Him I rivalled, when I would not seem a mortal among mortals ?—when the eyes, that saw but matter and its forms, should not, forsooth ! see mine—? Where was the generous soul of him I would have aped, when the glory that I sought was but a juggle of self-aggrandisement ?—To be invisible, good truth !—Justly have I been duped by the damnation I have

met with. I thought the happiness of others had been mine object.—I believe, even had it been, my own would have been the selfish motive: it seemed not *then* so, for I fancied I had done with happiness.—But to turn away from even that, for a bauble—for a bubble—I will not curse myself,—for such is the stuff that man is made of.—Enough of this. Listen to my daring—my deed of darkness—the damnation that has followed.’

CHAPTER IV.

‘I HAD mastered the secret wisdom of the Hebrew King :—I had possessed myself of the theories and practices of all those middle ages of apparent darkness, but hidden light :—I had superadded the accurate science of these later times that have cast off the wisdom of their fathers, and worked their own wealth from separate mines.—All this I had done. And another day would have given a choice of all things that imply not in themselves a contradiction. My training for this momentous time had been long—severe,—but delightful and glorious to the soul of man.—My muscular strength had become equal to much that is thought above all, but mechanical powers ;—my

frame had become adamant, and defied the dangers, that even the savage dreads ;—my senses had become keen above what others can conceive ;—my flesh was become almost fire-proof, and—by preparation—quite so ;—I never thirsted ;—my appetite was hearty, yet needed nearly nothing to appease it ;—hunger, I was all but incapable of feeling ;—the sleep, that refreshed and strengthened me—might be measured almost by minutes.—Such was I in body ;—and my mind—was independent of circumstance ; it was vassal but to my will :—buoyant, calm, collected, rapid, abstracting, classing, analysing, grasping, reasoning, fanciful, grave, or gay,—it was all and each of these instantly and immediately, that I chose it should be so : the telescope and microscope in one—were but a type of my mental vision at that period.—Time stole on—night fell ;—every thing was prepared for all those forms and ceremonies, and combinations of signs, syllables, and numbers,—which—negative in and of themselves—are blessed under certain circumstances, by higher powers, and allowed to be so by the Highest.—It wanted but one watch of the appointed hour. I paced my room recollecting, reasoning, arranging. I was quite calm—through prayer, long self-strengthening, and self-mastering.—At last I had seen all things properly disposed.—It wanted but one hour of the appointed hour. And all was

to my wish : visions of joy, hope, pleasure, glory—began to rise like the fumes of wine before my brain : I quelled them :—one by one I put them by ; one by one they succeeded each other : I shook them off ; they re-arose—they dispersed more reluctantly, — they re-arose again—singly—or in vague fellowship, flitting before me like the many changing, vanishing, and reappearing flames of a fire. My resistance got weaker and weaker. I sat down—and began castle-building. I often checked myself, but each time more indulgently : I drew a scheme of glory,—or rather my ideas—which I had now lost the power of associating at pleasure — marshalled themselves spontaneously in all the magnificence of uncurbed hope. The thought of Annie Seymour glided forward on the stage amid the varying and resplendent scene—*She cannot be mine*, cried I, and starting from my seat I dashed my clenched fist fiercely on my forehead, shrieking—*Damn me !—for a murderer and a fool !*—I threw me on the floor prostrate. Thoughts thronged more tumultuously upon me : time seemed at a stand still : my impatience was at fullest stretch.—*Oh ! that I were by her ! that I might stand viewless by her side ! I would give worlds—I would give all my hopes.* That instant was of intense pain. I felt fainting with the riot of my feelings ; and my eyes seemed swimming in light, as though a noon sun were shining on their

shut lids.—I opened them : it was no delusion. A red lurid lustre was seen forming within and from out of the atmosphere of the room. I looked round affrighted—my glance fell on the clock-dial; it was half an hour since all things had been ready—it was half an hour to the crisis I expected. But could I expect aught from above, *now*?—The red light grew and grew, but gained no definite appearance—it had no outline.—*What is this?*—said I involuntarily.—It is I—answered a voice from out that light.—*Who art thou? let me see thee.*—WHEN THOU ART, WHAT I AM, THEN MAY I BE SEEN OF THEE.—*And what is that?*—A POWER ABOVE THAT OF ALL MEN.—*That will I too be quickly.*—UNAIDED?—*No: but I would see who aids me.*—OF A TRUTH, FRIEND HENRY—sneeringly replied the voice—THOU HAST GONE THE WRONG WAY TO WORK FOR THAT:—WHY NOT CALL ME, INSTEAD OF HIM?—*I cannot see thee.*—DOST NOT SEE ME? *No, I see but a light.*—I HAVE MY NAME FROM LIGHT—THEY CALL ME LUCIFER.—The marrow thrilled through my spine at that terrible name, as I gasped out—*Who sent for thee? What wantest thou?*—HADST THOU NOT A WISH, AS I CAME HITHER? WILL IT BE, BUT THROUGH ME?—*It will not—should not,*—*why should it?* thought I—and now all is over if I take not this.—Meanwhile there was an awful pause.—The prey of passion as I had

suffered myself to be, my toil was rendered abortive,—my prior perseverance would go for nothing,—my study and watching would not count! my hope had been a cheat. All was to begin again—and again perhaps in vain.—THOU'DST BE INVISIBLE?—said my invisible visitor.—*Aye, at all costs*—cried I impatiently.—AT THINE OWN BIDDEN PRICE THEN! 'TIS A HANDSOME ONE ENOUGH—said the voice with a demoniac half-laugh.—GIVE ME THY HAND.—I rushed forward and thrust my arm through that hot red light: my sleeve was scorched to ashes; but my hand met within—a grasp like the ice of centuries. I swooned.'

CHAPTER V.

‘WHEN I recovered, the sun had risen,—the room felt close.—I put open the casement, and the sweet morning wind sickened me.—However I rushed out of doors:—I went to bathe—for cold-bathing was what had always dealt a physical happiness, as it were, to my mind in its most distracted moments. As I ran toward a point, where the river wound broadly and most beautifully to where a few yards lower it entered a young plantation of forest trees,—I observed a young man dressing. As I came on he bent forward towards me as in horror and astonishment; he seemed seeking something where I was. He was but a few yards off, when he wildly gasped and—with

an inarticulate gabble and one hand pointing to my shadow—he held his other trembling with fear at arm’s length full before his face. *Karl Bleitzen!* cried I—for I knew in him my dearest friend. At the name he shrieked—and, springing into the stream as he was, he tried to swim over:—but an excessive dread, which flushed and paled his face—forehead and all—by turns,—seemed to have benumbed his sinews: he was drowning. I leaped in to save him; but, as my shadow crossed him, he made a violent plunge and then dived. He could not stay long under the water;—and I seized him as soon as, much earlier than he was wont, he rose to take breath. The strength fear had lent him—was again rendered useless by another cramp: and I made good head with my prize against the stream,—though, driven by the eastern breeze, it set down its channel with considerable power and speed. Karl was not however senseless: he made a desperate hard struggle and—instead of clinging to me, as the drowning mostly do—he freed himself and, pushing me off with more than man’s energy, dived again to the bottom. He never came up again alive.—Karl Bleitzen, student at Berlin, had been my heart’s own brotherling—to use one of his native expressive phrases. The pride and naughtiness of that heart hath murdered him.——I am not inclined to paint you what latter accidents have passed

over such a landscape as my life, to tell of idiotcy, insanity, and sudden death how they have heralded my coming: till I was forced, like the fatal screech owl, to secret myself for ever from the blessed sun. I strode along the world unseen, not unperceived: and where I strode, my steps were tracked by withering and woe. You have heard me—what I was; you see me—what I *am* in person. I have often had the will—but never yet the power to make my presence materially visible to man, till I felt as it were inspired with a knowledge of that power the other day—yesterday: even as Sampson, in his last hour, felt his strength return to him as before. Sure I may hope that so it is with me,—that my earthly punishment is nearly, by this last severest grief, fulfill'd. Merciful God! if it be so—I thank thee!—

My brother, here is a storm towards—I see it gathering. Let us out, my brother, for I like not, and I brook not, at such times, the dwellings of mankind.'

John assented and accompanied his brother.

CHAPTER VI.

* * * * *

ON the brow of that magnificent declivity,—from whence looking forward, the horizon seemed floating in the farther clouds—and earth and heaven one mass of mist and tempest,—on its very brink stood Henry Lovell, and leaned against the bole of the already often stricken pine-tree. — John knelt and clasped his knees and seemed ready to worship him, if he would but return home.—

But no—‘Merciful God! if it may be’—were Henry’s words—‘I thank thee and I praise thee. Elsewhere—my punishment will at least be lonely; the guiltless will not share it. In thy good pleasure be its end, Anointed One!—’

As he spake—darkness became light over all the heavens, — the living flame ran flashing through the sheet of fire—John was thrown to some distance.—His brother, who stood erect through all, was when he woke and returned—a black and rotten corpse ; and he but remembered the burning fluid smoking down the tree—the tree split down with a crash like thunder—and, amid all, the faint articulated sound of—‘ Merciful !’—

The above is from the papers of Sir John Mann, who resided the last seven years of his life at Herbertsey in Cumberland; and died there. It was found among the papers of the Rev. J. Cox, lately resident at that place, who died 1769, in whose hand-writing occurs the following note in the margin—

“ Dear Jane,

John Lovell is, I think, himself.”

THE IMPOSTOR.

THE IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE reader of the following tale is requested to conceive that the events contained therein happened in the year 1632, on the bridal night of the Count Ernest d'Offen, with the lady Clara, daughter of the Baron de Werner, and that the opening dialogue is carried on between the former and the hereditary Prince of Brandebourg.

“Nay—but your highness must first promise to name it to no living being—not even to the Lady Clara, as it is my wish to surprise her with the intelligence myself.”

‘Well, Ernest, if you so desire it, I pledge my word.’

“Hearken then, and give me joy!” and as he spoke, Ernest, Count d’Offen drew from his bosom, opened, and read the following letter :—

“After five and twenty years of exile from my native land, I learn my sovereign has proclaimed my pardon. I am informed a young general, whose fame has reached me in my obscure retreat—the Count Ernest d’Offen—is the child of my most unhappy marriage, and the cause of my pardon and return. Should it be no delusion, I may yet be happy—by seven this evening I shall repair to the chateau of my early friend, the Baron de Werner, which adjoins my own forfeited estate. I write this, that should it please heaven to restore me to my son, I may press him to my heart, ere I enter the dwelling of my forefathers.”

D’OFFEN.”

‘My dear Ernest,’ continued the prince, as his friend ceased reading, “indeed, from my very heart, I give you joy, and I will leave you to judge my feelings on the subject, when I inform you at the very moment I was planning in my own mind how I could best break to you the news, which I had deemed indisputable, of your father’s death !”

“ ’Tis strange !” exclaimed Ernest.

‘ I have this day,’ the Prince continued, ‘ had an interview with Birman, the valet who accompanied your parent in his flight. He informed me that the wretched villain Folk, his foster-brother, who procured his condemnation, hunted him out in his seclusion, and with the most barbarous determination mortally wounded him.’

“ Most extraordinary !” ejaculated the young count.

‘ Not so,’ returned the other, ‘ every thing is now explained—the faithful valet, himself wounded in defending his lord, was conveyed by some peasants in a senseless state to a neighbouring village, where, after a protracted confinement of upwards of a month, he proceeded hither. Doubtless then, Ernest—for Birman says he saw him fall—doubtless, I say, your father was preserved in the same unlooked for way !”

“ That is possible, certainly,” assented Ernest.

“ And then,” the Prince continued, “ having heard of the proclamation issued for his pardon, has returned to his native country, Birman believing him no longer in existence !”

“ Ah ! my poor — poor father,” exclaimed the young man, for the moment giving way to the melancholy thoughts that crowded on his mind at the recollection of his parent’s mis-

ries—"how have you been abused! and by whom? by one from whom you were entitled to the deepest gratitude and firmest friendship! But I must part from you, Augustus," he added to the Prince in an altered tone of voice—"It is already close upon the hour of seven, so I must hasten to the baron's castle. Make such excuses to my lovely wife, accounting for my absence as your fancy can invent, until I am enabled to plead my own, in presenting to her my long-lost parent! adieu, my prince, and see you keep my secret trustily!"

"But stop, Ernest! stop!" exclaimed the prince, arresting his departure, "what excuse am I to make? what am I to say?"

"Any thing on earth you please, except the truth," replied the count. "You may say, I—but see! the Lady Clara is approaching! say what you please! adieu!" and as he spoke he hastily released his arm, and hurried from the room.

"Pleasant task, upon my honour, this—and easy too!" muttered the prince when he was left alone, "to frame excuses to a newly married lady for the absence of her lord upon her bridal night! well—so be it then;" saying this he leant against a marble pillar where he stood, in which posture we will leave him awaiting the appearance of the Countess d'Offen, in order to obtain the while a retrospective glance at

the family affairs of Ferdinand, the hitherto proscribed Count of Offen.

When yet an infant in his cradle, he had, by the cunning of his nurse, been supplanted in his rights by her own infant, Ferdinand Folk, (an individual already named). This woman was much esteemed in the count's family, in consequence of which her own suppositious son (in reality the Count d'Offen) was permitted to reside at the castle, brought up with the wrongful heir of Offen, and treated in all respects as though he were his brother; in addition to which the strong resemblance which their persons bore to one another, increased the feeling of regard the old Count d'Offen entertained towards his own, though unknown child.

When this deceit had been successfully practised for upwards of twelve years, the mother of the feigned count was attacked with an illness which eventually terminated her existence. On her death-bed, stung with remorse for the crime she had perpetrated, and with a view to save her soul from purgatory, she was led to make a full confession of the fraud she had so long maintained.

Having for so many years called him by the name of son, the father of Ferdinand d'Offen could not turn the innocent impostor from his door: and though his own child was instantly restored to his right and station as the heir of

Offen, the foster-brother was not sent adrift. The old count felt too strong an attachment towards the boy to thrust him friendless into the world. Folk, therefore, continued at the castle, ate at the same table with Ferdinand, and was treated in every respect as had been the rightful heir of Offen, when considered as the humble foster-brother and dependant. Yet notwithstanding every kindness that could be lavished on him, it would be absurd to say he did not feel the difference:—there existed the change—the great overwhelming change—from the offspring of the Lord d’Offen, to the offspring of his nurse!

Folk heard the annunciation, and felt the change arising from it, without a murmur, but the existence of the fact which produced that change, did not the less rankle in his heart. He was aware that any superficial shew of malice would but render his situation worse, and as an alternative, he cloaked his feelings under expressions of apparently sincere regard, and became a deep and artful hypocrite. The daily noble acts of confidence and kindness on the part of his foster-brother, were received by Folk with abundant external demonstrations of gratitude, while his heart yearned but for the downfall of his benefactor. Suffice it to say that the way in which he evinced the sincerity of his protestations, was, from the hour he ceased to be termed “my lord,” one continu-

ous plot in his own mind to effect the ruin of his friend.

Time rolled by, and the young men advanced in years, the similarity of their forms and features growing more remarkable as each year passed; and as they attained the age of eighteen, the old count died, leaving Ferdinand heir to all his honors and estates. His first act when he assumed his parent's title, was to settle on his foster-brother a competency for life, and shortly afterwards succeeded in obtaining for him a highly honourable military post.

Other years rolled by, and Ferdinand Count d'Offen, and the Princess Adelaide, daughter of the Elector of Brandebourg, became mutually enamoured of each other. The attachment was maintained under the express disapprobation of the Elector, and consequently, ended in a clandestine marriage. The strictest secrecy was maintained—Folk being the only confidant; but the caution which was employed appeared to be of no avail, for two days subsequent to his marriage with the princess, Ferdinand was arrested by a mandate from the elector, and ordered to instant execution, while Adelaide was detained a state prisoner in the palace at Brandebourg: they had been betrayed—and by whom? The grateful Folk! But the count Ferdinand was not fated just then to die. Baron de Werner (the father of the youthful bride already mentioned to the

reader) was the castellan of Brandebourg castle, and having known and loved the count from youth, connived at his escape.

Having first hastened to his own chateau in order to secure what money and jewels he possessed, the Count Ferdinand fled the country, his valet Birman being the sole companion of his flight. His young and lovely wife did not long survive his loss; she lingered on in hopeless misery, and ere a year elapsed, died in giving birth to the Count Ernest d'Offen.

Afflicted by his daughter's death, but still inveterate against her lord, the elector reared the infant in his palace.—As he advanced to manhood he rose to eminence in the army, and became the chosen friend and confidant of the hereditary Prince of Brandebourg. The traitor Folk did not long reap the fruits of his unprincipled villainy:—disgraced at Court, he went to hide his head,—whither, no one knew or cared.

Meanwhile every opportunity which presented itself, Ernest used to its utmost limits to procure his parent's recall from banishment,—but on every occasion he was unsuccessful. At length after a signal victory he had gained, when the Kingdom of Prussia rang loudly with his praise, he again ventured to solicit the elector for his father's re-call, at the same time intimating, that if his boon was denied, he

should throw up his commission in the army and retire to his estate. This appeal produced the so much desired effect,—a proclamation for his pardon—the intelligence whereof had gained the exile's ears and prompted his return,—was issued throughout the kingdom.

But the reader may consider this digression tedious:—we will therefore return to the situation of the hereditary prince, who, leaning against a marble pillar, awaited in perplexity the entrance of the new-made bride.

“Good even to your ladyship,” said he—advancing with his extended hand to meet the countess as she entered.

“Perhaps your highness can inform me,—as you appear a party so intimately concerned,—on what important errand my Lord d’Offen is engaged, that on my approach he makes so rapid a retreat?” These words were uttered by the countess in a tone of evident pique, and as she returned the salute of the hereditary prince, it seemed apparent from its constraint, that she considered him not slightly implicated in the culpability of her lord.

The Countess d’Offen possessed a peculiarly Prussian cast of countenance, and the playful air of discontent that now pervaded her lovely features, and the half pouting lip which added to the exhibition of that feeling, rendered her on this occasion even more beautiful than ordinary.

“Indeed you do me wrong, sweet lady”—said the prince in answer to her observation.

“It may be as you say, undoubtedly”—returned the countess in the same assumed tone of voice, “but your highness must admit the circumstance as being somewhat singular, that since you have honored this poor castle with your illustrious presence, my lord has hardly interchanged a word with me! he leaves me and the guests he has invited, to receive you here,—and when I follow him, he hurries from the room!”

“Nay, lovely countess, never let it anger you—believe me when I say your husband is engaged on matters of some importance.”

“Importance! and pray then may I make so bold as to enquire of your highness, if my wedding with his lordship goes for nothing?”

“Confusion!” muttered the prince “that word should not have slipped my tongue! oh! undoubtedly”—he said aloud—“a deal—a vast deal:—unquestionably—of the first—of paramount importance—but his absence—now—is owing partially—in fact, dear lady—to be candid with you,—he is even now engaged in executing a kind of a—slight surprise for you!”—

“Oh!” exclaimed her ladyship with a prolonged emphasis upon the word—“a surprise you say? then must I forgive him! ay! and

my gracious pardon shall even be extended to your graceless royal self—but on this condition only—that I may be made your confidant as to its nature!”

“Really, fair countess,” replied the prince with a bow of courteous gallantry,—“there are but few penalties I would not undergo to save me from your harsh displeasure, or fewer still, I would not pay to dissipate it when incurred,—but in the present case, it would—really—be——”

“A fine too heavy to incur? well, well, I know what you would say”—the countess added as the slight shade of affected anger vanished from her brow—“I read your countenance, good sir,—and learn from indications written there, that you are more deeply implicated in his lordship’s plot than I had deemed you were.—Well, Lalep?”—she added as her husband’s secretary entered the apartment—“A stranger is anxious to have speech, in private, either of my lord, or of your ladyship.”—

“Is he an invited guest, Lalep?” asked the latter.

“He did not give his name, my lady.”—

“I will see him, should he wish it,” said the countess, and then added to herself, “some clue mayhap calculated to unravel this mystery!”—the secretary left the room to execute his lady’s bidding, and the prince, adding :

“ Well, I shall hasten to adorn myself ere I join the banquet in the hall,”—followed his example.

“ Have I the honor of addressing the Countess d’Offen ? ”—enquired the stranger as Lalep ushered him into the apartment.

“ That is my title, sir,” replied the countess.

“ Formerly the Lady Clara de Werner ? ”

“ Such was my rank, sir.”

“ Then,” continued the former speaker, “ in the person of your ladyship, I recognize the daughter of my preserver—my friend ! ”

“ How ! you are then acquainted with my father ? ”

“ Aye ! you see before you the persecuted father of your husband—the injured Ferdinand, Count d’Offen ! ”

“ My noble lord ! ” exclaimed the countess, affectionately taking the stranger’s hand — “ words could but ill express my feelings at this moment ! and Ernest, too ! our surprise will be a mutual one ! — ”

“ Ah !—my son—my son.”

“ He left us but this moment. The Prince of Brandebourg honours our castle with his presence, I will hasten and conduct him hither ! ”

“ Do so—do so, my daughter.” Away the countess bounded, and had hardly crossed the threshold of the door ere the prince encoun-

tered her ;—encircling her arm in his, she drew him, without the explanation of a word, again into the apartment.

“ There !” said she, extending one of her fair arms towards the count—“ let me present to your highness, the long absented owner of these halls, Ferdinand, Count d’Offen !”

“ Ferdinand Count d’Offen ! I need not say my lord”—exclaimed the prince, advancing with a condescending dignity—“ with what sincerity I congratulate and greet you on returning to your native land :—but I wonder though to see you here alone !”—he added—“ Ernest——”

“ Has not yet returned,”—said the countess interrupting him, and then continued, “ and now, in order to make some amends for your late seditious conduct, your highness must promise to do what I require.”

“ The promise is made.” replied the prince.

“ Then see you keep it, as truly as you have your faith towards my husband:—be sure you give not Ernest the slightest intimation of his father’s presence in the castle, and to surprise him with the news, shall be my task.”—

“ But, fair lady,” returned the individual whom she addressed, “ should you not bear in mind the possibility of your husband’s previous knowledge of the fact ?”

“ Now I do request your highness, if you value my good word, not to favor us with

tedious ‘possibilities.’ I merely solicit at your hands a simple promise.”

“Well—if your ladyship insists”—he continued, smiling—“as you seem so anxious on the subject”—he turned towards the count uttering a low and meaning laugh, “why I will even make the promise!”

“’Tis well,” replied the countess, “I shall reckon on your word.”—“And now, my lord,” the prince continued, “I entreat you tell me what good fortune enabled you to recover from the blow of the persecuting traitor Folk?”

“Ah! how came your highness by a knowledge of that fact?” enquired Ferdinand.

“My authority was Birman—your devoted servant!”

“What! then he lives?” questioned the former, speaking with a commingled emotion of surprise and joy.

“He does,” replied the prince, “I myself saw him but this morning, when he related to me all the circumstances, and wept your death as sure!”

“Kind—worthy man!” exclaimed the count, apparently touched by this instance of affection as evinced by his domestic. “Yes—so indeed it was!—the traitor Folk—the man—the foster-brother—with whom in infancy I had been nourished—even from the same bosom—with whom, in youth, I had been

reared—for whom, in after life, I had deprived myself of a portion of my patrimony and exerted every means to benefit him: that man, not content with, wantonly,—causelessly,—blasting my hopes and prospects here, my peace, elsewhere and for ever,—must track me, as the savage does the deer—hunting me down from land to land, until, at length, he overtook and sought to slay me! but Providence interposed between the execution of his wish, and the perpetration of the deed! I was discovered by an herdsman senseless on the spot where the miserable man had stabbed me,—conveyed to a neighbouring village and restored to life.”

“The fate—the very fate of Birman.”

“On returning reason my first enquiry was concerning him—and from the indefinite answers I received, I had good cause to fear my faithful follower had fallen a sacrifice to his attachment in defending me! Heaven be praised I am deceived—we both survive, and now he shall reap the full reward of his fidelity.”—At this moment the steward entered to inform the countess and the prince, that the company waited their presence to commence the dance; thither, therefore, they adjourned.

The grand hall of the Chateau d’Offen wherein the guests had met, was about two hundred feet in length, and fifty feet in breadth: the roof was composed of black and

richly carved oak, and formed by groined arches :—at the junction of every arch, of which there were thirty in length and eight in breadth ; there descended a long polished point of the same dark wood, at the extremity of each of which there hung a chandelier containing five waxen lights, and opposite these, fastened on the wall, were similar lustres,—so that on entering the hall, the observer was dazzled by the sudden blaze of light, which, reflected on the highly polished panelling seemed multiplied to infinity:—immediately above, at stated intervals, fluttered various standards and pennons, being either such as belonged to the ancient house of Offen, or had been captured in the fight ;—many of them so torn and tattered, that the less violent the wind, the greater their prospect of endurance:—these, as the brilliant lights glittered on their waving colours, produced a singularly gorgeous effect.

The flooring of the hall which was tessellated with squares of white and black marble was completely cleared, and even the tresselled tables at which the retainers were wont to dine were all removed—and nothing left that could impede the dance, but lines of forms to serve as resting places for the guests : Upon the carpeted dias at the extremity of the hall, three tented thrones were raised, of which the centre one, intended for the prince, was the more lofty and magnificent.—Above this was reared the electoral standard of Brandebourg, quar-

tered with the arms of the hereditary prince. The thrones on either side were to receive the bride and bridegroom, and over these were placed the banners of the house of Offen, quartered with the bearings of the de Werner family:—

It might be considered in this place as somewhat irrelevant to dilate upon the striking difference which existed between an assembly in the year 1632 and the year 1832, so we shall content ourselves with stating that they were not then confined to the high and wealthy, but extended to the retainers of the lord and the peasants of the village ; and on the present occasion, stationed on either side the hall, were rows of peasantry, ready to commence the enlivening dance, each bearing in their hand a basket of fresh culled rose leaves,—to be strewed in the pathway of the bride.

The hum of greeting voices became hushed, as the names of the prince, the old count, and Lady Clara were announced.

“ Behold restored to us, my friends, our noble host, but not forgotten friend,—the Count Ferdinand d’Offen !” There was a momentary pause—an involuntary rush towards the spot—and then the shout of, “ Joy for his return and length of life to him !” rose from every lip.—As unaffected as unbounded was the delight evinced by the peasantry at their lord’s return,—and warm and hearty were

the congratulations that lord received, as, between the prince and Lady Clara, he advanced towards the dias :—On arriving at the thrones, the prince signified his intention of abandoning the seat which had been prepared for him, in favour of its rightful owner ; but tears appeared to start to the old count's eyes, as he courteously declined the honour,—the prince was positive, however, and more by the influence of force than of persuasion he succeeded in his determination, and the old count stepped upon the dias, there to witness the approaching festivities, and await the arrival of his son.

The band struck up—the dancers rose,—partners were selected,—when a domestic announced the return of Count Ernest d'Offen.

The Lady Clara started to her feet, and having first drawn forward the scarlet cloth which covered the entrance to the throne, so as to leave Ferdinand concealed within, took the prince's arm, and advanced to meet him.

“ A thousand pardons, dearest Clara, for my untimely absence,—but if you knew——”

‘ Oh ! do not name it, I beseech ye,’ replied the lady with an inward laugh of anticipated pleasure. ‘ Believe me, my revenge is fully taken—’

“ Indeed !” replied the count, “ but I think I can offer an excuse which will disarm your wrath—learn then that my father——”

‘Your father!’ echoed Clara in a tone of chagrin—

“Lives, and is here!”

‘Indeed’—answered Lady Clara, drily.

“Indeed;” repeated Ernest, “why really, Clara, did I not know thee better, I should almost say that thou wert vexed to hear of it!”

‘Well, *I am* vexed,” answered Clara, “*very* vexed indeed—I had set my heart on being the first to apprise you of the Count’s return, and then I find——’

“How! you know it then,” interrupted Ernest, in his turn assuming a tone of disappointment. “Ah!” he continued, turning towards the Prince, who was apparently listening to what was going forward with a half bewildered look, “I see how it is—your highness has——”

‘Kept his faith with you,’ added Clara, and then continued, as she again led Ernest towards the thrones. ‘But I will, at all events, present you to your father, and rest content with that!’

“Present me to my father! you?” questioned Ernest. They stood upon the dias.—

‘Behold!’ exclaimed the Countess, as having reached the throne, she drew aside the scarlet curtain of the centre seat, and discovered Ferdinand—

“Why—why—do my senses serve me truly?—what do I see?”

‘Your father’—answered Lady Clara.

“My father!” energetically repeated the Count Ernest.

‘Yes—my dear—my long lost son—’ replied Ferdinand, descending from the throne with open arms to meet him, ‘you do again behold your banished father!’

“You! you my father!” continued Ernest, as with a look of anxiety and wildness, he, stepping back, avoided the old man’s embrace. “You! oh God!” He pressed his clenched hands tightly against his forehead for a second, then leaped from the dias—wound his way through the crowds of astonished spectators who shrunk back as he advanced, and was instantly out of sight.

‘In Heaven’s name, what can he mean!’ was echoed simultaneously by Clara and the Prince, while looks of wonder were exchanged, and exclamations of surprise were uttered by the multitude.

“Mean!” said the old Count, “Oh! would to God that I had not returned! You saw him—my own son—when I endeavoured, in the fulness of my affection—in my own hall—to clasp him to my heart,—he repulsed me—fled from me! oh! would to Heaven I had not returned! I am an intruder in my own halls!”

‘Some deep motive must be concealed in this;’ added the Prince thoughtfully,—‘I will

follow him !”—his foot was already on the dias step, when a cry of “Room—room there ! make way !” rose from the opposite extremity of the hall, and an exclamation of horror burst from every lip, when it was perceived that Ernest was advancing at a rapid pace, holding by the hand an individual who bore in every respect so exact a resemblance to the Count Ferdinand, that, when he released him on the dias making him confront the other, he gazed in hopeless agony, alternately on each, in the endeavour to distinguish some difference between them.

“What concerns my Lord of Offen ?” now questioned the Prince, as he observed Ferdinand turn pale and stagger from the object placed before him, “you are agitated !”

‘Agitated !’ answered the latter, with a vast effort recovering himself, ‘And have I not then cause ? Behold before me, my assassin !’

“How ! Folk ?” questioned the Prince and Clara.

‘I *thy* assassin, miserable man ;’ replied the stranger.

“Monster ! monster !” continued the Count in a tone of deep reproach,—“and is it thus that that thou repayest the many benefits conferred on thee, both by my father and myself ? art thou not content with having, by thy unparalleled treachery, procured my banishment—aye, and soiled thy hands, too, with my blood,

—that thou must come, to curse with thy hated presence, the first—the only moment of joy that I have felt for five and twenty years ! fly monster ! fly ! and rid me of your presence !”

During this speech, and the pause which followed, Ernest had betrayed a species of nervous excitement bordering on phrenzy—he breathed hard—and swallowed almost convulsively, as if endeavouring to subdue his feelings—then raising his right hand (which trembled to so painful a degree, as to render it difficult to say at what he pointed) towards the stranger, he said, with a voice of corresponding unsteadiness, ‘You see—you see—he says that you are not my father ! You hear, but do not answer him !’

“I confess it—I confess it my son,” replied the new claimant to the honours of the Count d’Offen—“and his effrontery all but paralyzes me ! I feel a sickening sensation creep o’er my senses, at hearing the murderer accuse his victim of the crime of which he alone stands guilty !”

‘Prove it ! prove it then !’ repeated a dozen voices of the eager guests, who had pressed up to the very foot of the dias.

‘Aye ! prove it !’ echoed he who had been acknowledged by the Prince and Lady Clara, as the rightful Lord of Offen, and whom, for the love of perspicuity, we will distinguish by

the name of Ferdinand. ‘How can he so? do you not see my very presence confounds him! aye! even to silence and trembling!’

“And yet”—murmured Ernest to himself, “*should* he prove my father!”

“How!”—suddenly interrupted the last speaker. “Do you hesitate, my son? my daughter! my daughter! will you not urge your husband to the truth!”

“I!” echoed the countess—“would to God I could! did I but think——”

“Holy mother save me! or I shall go mad beneath this fearful doubt!” exclaimed Ernest as he gazed with wistful eyes towards the stranger, for whom, notwithstanding the general adverse feeling which existed, he felt the strongest inward yearning.

—“Nay, my son!—nay, do not even look at him!”—urged Ferdinand, as he appeared to read the young man’s feelings, “avoid him! avoid him! and come to my heart, at once!”

The prince looked at Ernest with an expression of countenance that indicated to him his advice was so to act:—He vacillated, and was about to kneel at the feet of the last speaker, when he was prevented from so doing by the stranger, who, throwing himself between the two, exclaimed, “Stop, Ernest! the bare idea of seeing you upon your knees before the man who has stained his hands with your father’s blood, sickens me to the very soul! No, no,

my son, let not even his cold and heartless treachery seduce thee from the truth ! To thy heart I will appeal, Ernest—*that* shall be my judge ! One of us stands here a vile impostor ; one of us, believing he has killed the other, comes to rob him of his rights !”

“ He does ! he does !” cried Ferdinand, “ and well thou knowest thou art that wicked man !—Look ! look !” he continued loudly as though addressing his words to the crowd beneath him while he pointed his extended hand towards the stranger, “ Mark you the homicide’s studied air of guiltlessness ! See ! his very calmness—so base—so hypocritical—announces him to be fabricating new falsehoods in his mind ! See him !”

“ Oh, Ernest, my son—my son”—observed the stranger, in accents of, apparently, deep, though resigned sorrow : “ Is it thus, then, I am doomed to meet thee ? already I have felt thy heart beating against my heart—thy tears have mingled with my tears—and it is with grief—with pain—with anguish I behold thee now in doubt, to acknowledge me thy father !”

“ Oh ! for the love of God but prove you are so !”—cried Ernest in a voice of agony which shewed the inward workings of his feelings. “ But prove the fact, and I at once will kneel to—”

“ My assassin !” interrupted Ferdinand ; and then added in a milder tone, “ Nay, Ernest,

my son, be not longer duped by him ! you hoped—you prayed for my return—and but for the perfidy of that fiend in human form, we had been happy ! but, praised be Heaven ! I can, aye ! and will confound him ! See here !” and as he spoke he drew from out his bosom a small female miniature, superbly set with brilliants.

“ Ah !” exclaimed the other as his eyes fell upon the painting, “ what do I see ! the portrait of my wife !”

“ The portrait of thy wife,”—said Ferdinand contemptuously as he placed the miniature in Ernest’s hands. “ Behold, my son ! thy mother’s blessed likeness ! Is not *this* sufficient proof, my friends ? and here ! take this ! and this ! and this !” And so saying he handed to the young count several valuable jewels. “ These are what I hastily secured ere flying from my native land—little—little dreaming of the future purposes to which they were destined to be applied !” The stranger paused a second ere he spoke, and then, as if his indignation gained a mastery over his previous calmness, said, “ Double—double—double hypocrite ! this, then, is the use that thou dost make of the jewels thou didst rob me of !”

“ That thou, sinner, wouldst have torn from me, thou shouldst have said !”

“ Oh Clara ! Clara !” exclaimed Ernest, snatching up her hand, “ this is unsupport-

able—it is !—it is ! After a weary exile of five and twenty years, my father is restored—he is near to me—I see him—hear him:—he is either there ! or there ! and yet I cannot recognize him from his all but murderer; horror! horror!” And hiding his face behind his hands, the young count burst into a flood of tears.

“ Come, my friend,” observed the prince, taking his hand, which was violently clenched within the countess’s. “ Leave it to me—I will discover the truth ere long.”

“ Ere long !” repeated Ernest, “ I cannot live another moment under this suspense !” his voice rose higher as he spoke. “ To feel myself so shamefully deceived—my wretched parent so cruelly abused, it—”

“ My dear lord—for my sake be calm,” urged the countess in an imploring tone.

“ Calm, Clara !” he continued loudly, “ I am calm ! quite calm. I—they—they—” —his lips moved convulsively —his arm waved faintly above his head as though he were endeavouring to indicate by action, that which he would fain express by words,—and fell senseless by her side.

“ My son ! my son !” exclaimed Ferdinand, and the stranger ; as, almost simultaneously, they rushed towards the spot where the young count had fallen :—but the intervening arm of the hereditary prince opposed their progress.

“ Stand off—both !” he commanded in a haughty tone.

“Now, monster!” said Ferdinand to his adversary as he pointed to the senseless form, “are you satisfied?”

“Oh!” exclaimed the countess, starting from her husband’s side and falling on her knees before Ferdinand, “In pity—in mercy, if you have been practising deceit on us,—fly hence—fly—and I will bless you!”

“Holy mother!” was the answer. “And can you think—”

“Silence, man!” interrupted the stranger in a voice of stern authority: then turning to the prince, he added, “Sir, it is high time to put a period to this revolting scene:—I hold myself the prisoner of your highness—order that they seize that man, and let us both be carried into the presence of your royal father, the elector, and let him decide between the nobleman and plebeian impostor!”

“Consummate hypocrite!” returned the other sneeringly. “But, even your own debasing artfulness, I’ll turn to my account!—Prince—I consent to the impostor’s proposition, and await the orders of your highness.”

“So be it then!” replied the prince. “What ho, there! Guards!” and the numerous spectators of the passing scene made willing way for the electoral guards, as they advanced at their prince’s call.

“Arrest these men,” continued the latter, and confine them in separate apartments in the

castle tower till you hear my further pleasure." Thus ordered the prince, as he waved his hand towards the pretenders.

At the word 'arrest,' Ernest, who had recovered from his swoon, started from the arms of his bride, who, kneeling on a velvet cushion, was bending over him,—and by a powerful exertion gained his feet.

"No, my prince," said he, "No—that were useless rigor! Ferdinand Folk—whichever—I cannot bear to look on them!" And shrouding his eyes with his hand, he continued, resting as he spoke his head on Clara's shoulder—"whichever you may be—the castle gates are open—fly! while the opportunity remains for you!"

"That must not be," returned the prince. "It is incumbent on me to probe this matter to the quick! aye, and I will too, and punish to the death the vile impostor who has thus dared to foul the honourable name of Ferdinand Count d'Offen! Guards—obey!" and the real noble and pretended one were marched away to the tower of the castle amid lengthened cries of "Death to the Impostor!"

"Your highness is right, I believe," said Ernest as he took the prince's hand—"Come, dear Clara, we will retire—My guests and friends,"—he added as he turned towards them, "let not this night's mirth be broken in upon. Although the events which have just passed

will not permit our joining in it, consider my servants and the castle as your own!—I give you joy!”—Saying this, and preceded by the countess and the prince he left the hall.

On entering the library, the prince instantly wrote dispatches for Berlin, and requested Lalep, the secretary, beforenamed, to accompany the courier and return with Birman, the real count's valet; and in less than an hour he returned with the object of his search.

Again the prisoners were brought before the prince.

“I am now about to produce a witness,” said the latter, “whose words will prove the arbitrament of the cause.—Bring forward Birman!”

“Birman alive!” and “Birman here!” started simultaneously from the prisoner's lips.

“He is!” replied the prince, “and let the guilty man now tremble for his guilt!” They each assumed an air of indomitable contempt, the one towards the other, and each exclaimed, as the door of the apartment opened and Birman stood before the prince, “Now then! thy hour is come.”

“I understand your highness has—” Thus far the valet had proceeded ere his eye caught the figures of the prisoners. “Just Heaven!” he continued as he gazed alternately upon the two representatives of the house of Offen. “What do I see! my master and his foster-

brother ! Honored lord !” he continued, taking the hand of Ferdinand and kneeling at his feet, “ what joy is this ! and when I had lamented you so long as dead !”

“ Even as I had deemed thee, my—I cannot longer call thee servant—my faithful friend—for thy presence has possibly preserved me from an inglorious and unjust death, and restored me to my rights !”

Thus spoke Ferdinand, as he raised the valet from his knees.

“ Now then, sir !” exclaimed the Prince, addressing the stranger in a voice of sternness, “ should I not be satisfied by this ?”

Hitherto the stranger had stood with his arms folded on his breast, his eyes, fixed upon the ground, and his whole countenance indicative of, if not guilt, at least despair. He now, however, raised his eyes, and fixing them mildly on the Prince, said in a dispassionate tone of voice :—

“ I am an old man, my lord, and but ill able to stand up against evidence so artfully concentrated against my happiness as this appears to be. That I am the Count Ferdinand d’Offen, I swear ! that he,” pointing to his rival, “ is an impostor, I also swear ! and I now perceive that the man, whom like my accursed foster-brother, I cherished in my heart—that Birman has been in league with him against his lord, and probably concerned in the attempt

against my life ! But I am weary of this strife—wearied even of existence. Let me return to my exile to live and die—alone—unpitied, though uninsulted by ingratitude !”

“ Ha ! see you there my lord ! see you there !” said Ferdinand, “ the traitor *now* would get off spotless ! ha ! ha !” he continued, “ he now begins to tire of his sinful race, does he ? But he may go—he may go—I would not raise my hand against my foster-brother !”

“ Peace my lord,” interrupted the judge, and as he spoke, he called the young count aside, with whom, for some minutes, he appeared engaged in earnest conversation.

Although there had been a degree of subdued melancholy in the speech of the aged stranger, which for the moment seemed to check the unlimited credence the prince was inclined to give to Birman’s testimony, still he could not reconcile it with his feelings, as a sufficient cause for withholding the sentence he was about to pass ;—his reluctance, however, so to do, was heightened by the striking contrast presented in the resigned and quiet tones of the one, and the exulting speech and manner of the other—still, he could not definitively determine. He felt it was but natural for the rightful lord to speak exultingly, and again it was as natural that, should the stranger be the count, his overharrassed mind should sink depressed beneath the load that weighed upon it.

The prince appeared involved in the most painful doubt, and after a short pause, he again advanced towards Ferdinand and stating that he considered himself as no longer justified in doubting his identity, greeted him a second time, as Lord of Offen; while to the evident agony of Ernest, who, even after this convincing proof, leaned towards the stranger, he ordered his opponent to be arrested.

The guards in waiting had barely laid their hands upon the prisoner, ere Lalep the secretary entered, to say a courier had that instant arrived from Berlin waiting with despatches for his highness: they were ordered in, and the prince appeared unusually agitated as he perused their contents.

"Cruel! cruel!" he exclaimed as he concluded the dispatch, "to appoint me the executioner of such a task!"

"No evil news, I trust my prince?" said Ernest advancing to his side.

"Evil news indeed, my friend," replied the former. "Oh Ernest, they are from the minister of state, and he bids me execute the order of my father—of my sovereign! listen!" Saying this, he read aloud the following dispatch.

"Greeting:—

"To the Hereditary Prince of Brandebourg, these:—The Prince Regent and Elector of Brandebourg being instructed that the exiled Ferdinand Count d'Offen has returned to his

“estate, charges you, his well-beloved son, to execute this, his underwritten will.

“His Electoral Highness has been heretofore induced to hold out a fictitious pardon to the exiled noble, in the hope of once more getting him within his grasp. His plan appears to have succeeded: therefore, after having consulted his council on the point, his Electoral Highness forwards his command, that instantly upon receipt of this, you execute the judgment formerly pronounced against the count: namely, the sentence of death.”

“Death!” exclaimed the lord and the pretender in one voice.

“Aye,” returned the Prince, “such is indeed the word, and—fatal task—nothing is now left for me, but to obey the orders of my sovereign. Prepare three files of soldiers in the court-yard! light the torches! forward with the prisoner!”

“One moment pause!” enjoined the stranger who had been previously arrested, “Abused as I have been, I would not——”

“Silence, sir!” interrupted the Prince, “Guards! your duty!”

A second and somewhat more important interruption here ensued. The prisoner Ferdinand, and acknowledged Lord of Offen, throwing off the soldiers who had seized on him, and advancing towards the Prince with a counte-

nance on which such great variety of feelings appeared blended, that it would have been difficult to say what particular expression preponderated, said :—

“ Since it has pleased your royal father to make his honest pleasure known to us, by which the life of Ferdinand Count d’Offen becomes forfeited, learn then that I am *not* that man ! I am Ferdinand Folk !” Every one present started at the unexpected news : “ And now, my Lord Count,” he added, stalking up to the very feet of his benefactor, “ hear me ! I *hate* you ! I strove to take your life, but I was foiled ! I strove to beggar you—and place your title on my own head,—I have been balked ! my recompense must be, my heartfelt joy in witnessing your death ! I glory in my hate !” With an evil scowl indicative of deadly malice, he gazed upon the nobleman for upwards of a minute, and then slowly and emphatically uttering the words, “ I *hate* you !” retraced his steps to the opposite extremity of the apartment. At this period, Birman cast a hasty glance toward the entrances of the library, as though meditating an escape, but on seeing that his case was hopeless, he slunk behind his master in the futile hope that amid the bustle created by the confession of his guilty partner he should pass unmolested.

“ Adieu, my son—adieu !” said the Count d’Offen, without noticing the vindictive Folk ;

"It seems the will of heaven I should leave you, Ernest, and stand resigned—I could——" The old man was about to embrace his son, when the prince exclaiming:—

"Come—it is time to end this painful scene! Guards, your duty!" beckoned to his soldiers, and obeying the inclination of his hand, Folk and his accomplice, Birman, were made prisoners.

"Ha ha!" yelled the former wildly, as he darted a look of the utmost malignity towards the Prince—"is this your duty!"

"It is," replied the other, calmly: "you are convicted of a base attempt on the life of Count Ferdinand d'Offen—and die for it!—your help-mate at the task, Birman, there—stands convicted as your confederate, and he dies with you!" he turned towards the count, adding, "You are free, my lord! such is the mandate of my royal father."

Folk grated his teeth against each other, as, in dreadful doubt, he asked—

"And the letter from the minister?"

"Was penned by me for the very purpose to which it was applied, to convict a heartless ruffian as a liar and assassin!"

"Then damnation!" muttered Folk, and they were the last words he spoke:—neither compulsion nor persuasion could succeed in obtaining another sentence from his lips. He stood with his arms folded, nor did he withdraw his all but unearthly gaze of malice from the

count until he was finally removed from the apartment.

"My gracious Prince!" said the restored count, kneeling at his feet, "how shall I ever be enabled to repay this generosity?"

"Rise, my worthy lord," replied the former. "It is my province to be grateful for having had it in my power to preserve to the state so virtuous a nobleman, and to my friend Ernest and his lovely bride, so kind and good a father". The old man pressed them alternately to his heart, while the Prince continued, addressing the trembling Birman, "and now, stand forward you!"

Birman the moment he was released threw himself upon his knees before the Count d'Offen, and made a full confession of the part he had been induced to take in the conspiracy against his lord. How he had been seduced by the large promises of Folk; how he had, at the instigation of the same person, attempted to deceive the prince with regard to the real count's death—and finally how he had been tempted by his confidence in the success of their plot to continue, even in the presence of his injured master, the diabolical fraud he had commenced.

In compliance with the count's request, the prince consented to mitigate his sentence to perpetual banishment. With regard to the more guilty foster-brother he remained inflexible.

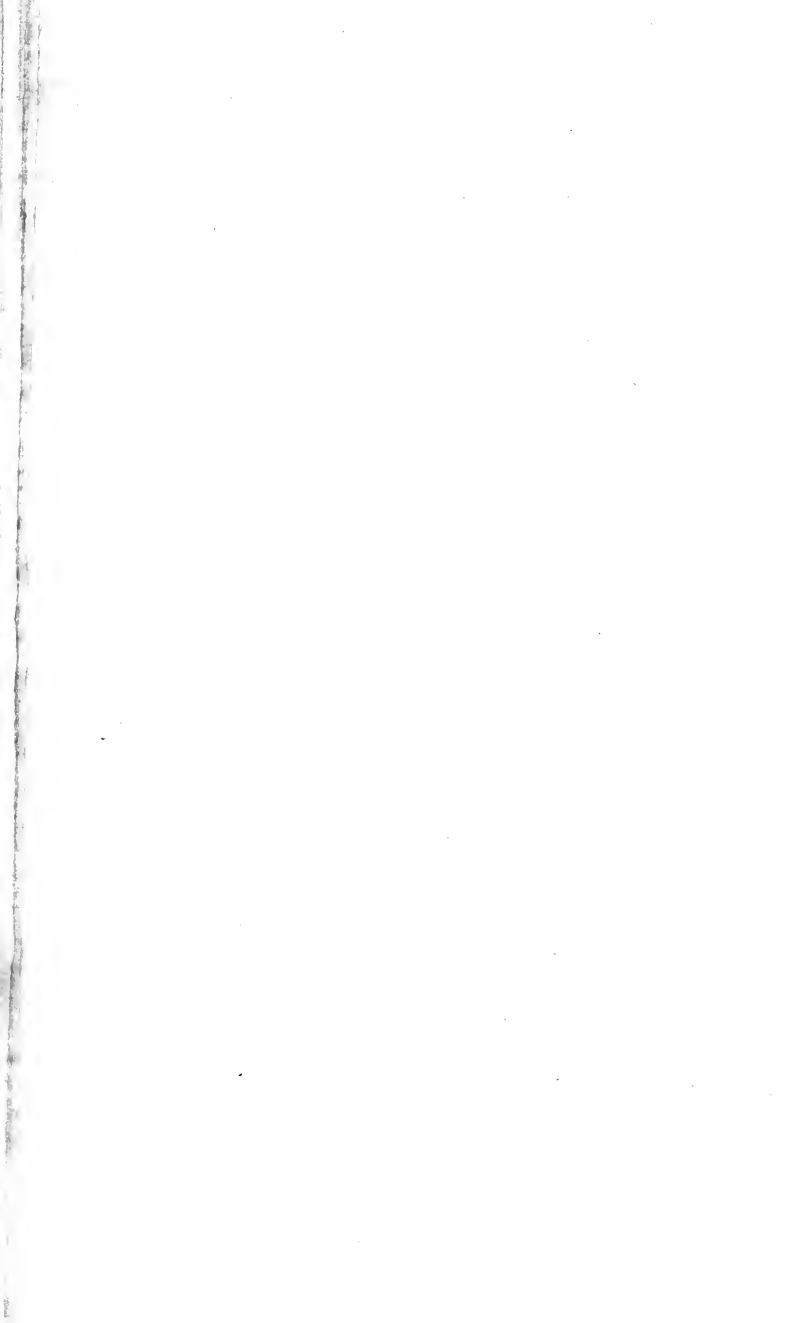
Folk was conducted to the castle dungeon, and the remaining party returned to the banquet-hall. The Count Ferdinand was seated on the Prince's throne, and welcomed and acknowledged amid the deafening acclamations of the whole assembly.

Before the execution of the 'Impostor,' we will draw the veil.

END OF VOL. II.

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